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Comparative Indian Literature

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Comparative Indian Literature

Volume 1

Director & Chief Editor

K. M. GEORGE

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Preface

The concept of Indian literature as dealt with in this work needs a little elucidation, for it has not meant precisely the same thing to all scholars past and present, Indian and foreign. To the western Orientalists and Indologists of the 19th century, Indian literature was essentially the literature produced in the ancient languages of India. Albrect Weber's *The History of Indian Literature* (1852) discusses only the literature of the first and second periods of the Indo-Aryan language, by which he meant the Vedic and Sanskrit periods. For want of a better term he named it 'Indian literature'. M. Winternitz's *History of Indian Literature* (1907) deals with the Vedic and Upanishadic literature as well as the vast body of writing in classical Sanskrit and Prakrits, including Pali. There is no mention of modern Indian literatures. Joseph Shipley's *Encyclopaedia of Literature* (1946) recognizes the existence of modern Indian literatures by giving them some space while giving Sanskrit literature a more important place. Cassell's *Encyclopaedia of World Literature* (2nd ed., 1973) is also not much different in its allocation of space, assigning a comparatively more significant place for Sanskrit (2500 words for Sanskrit and 4000 words for the nine modern Indian languages recognized as worth discussing). However, there is a shift in emphasis when it comes to the present period, the modern literatures coming into greater focus and Sanskrit receding into the background. Indian literature now is the sum total of the literatures produced in the Indian languages, modern and classical. This not only acknowledges the considerable development of literature in our living tongues, but is also indicative of a more realistic view of the Indian literary landscape.

The acceptance of the term in the singular (*Indian literature*) and in the plural (*Indian literatures*) should also be noticed in this connection. We have already referred to two titles of books in the singular. The Sahitya Akademi has published books entitled *Contemporary Indian Literature* (1957) and *Indian Literature Since Independence* (1973) both covering the literatures of fifteen languages. There are also books in English using the plural, Suniti Kumar Chatterji's *Languages and Literatures of Modern India*, for instance. Cassell's *Encyclopaedia* has used the term 'The Indian Literatures'. While we are accustomed to using the singular and the plural when we refer to literatures in India, we use only the plural when referring to the languages. We never say 'The Indian language', using the singular form as there is no language which can make such a claim. There are fifteen languages recognized by the Indian Constitution, and quite a few others, which can claim a sizeable literature. How can *fifteen* or more languages produce *one* literature? The question deserves careful study and diagnosis.

Since its inception in 1954, the Sahitya Akademi has been propagating the idea of oneness by using the slogan 'Indian Literature is one though written in many languages'. Does this hypothesis emanate from the concept that recognizes the cultural unity of India or is it more than that? Though many have accepted the idea as an aphorism, others have questioned it seriously. According to the latter, literature is totally language-based and, hence, intrinsically, even homogeneously, linked with the language in which it is written. Language being a cultural phenomenon, they continue, it is conditioned by its locale and the socio-historical forces in operation locally. Conse-

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quently, in their opinion, the literature of a particular language has its own special form and style, symbols and nuances. Therefore, it is more logical to say that there are as many literatures in India as there are languages. This argument has its own relevance and force. On the other hand, when we survey the various literatures of our country, it is possible to recognize some common characteristics which reveal their Indianness, some threads which hold them together despite their distinctive flavour and diverse associations. Dr S. Radhakrishnan in his foreword to Sahitya Akademi's publication *Contemporary Indian Literature* throws some light on this question when he says: 'There is a unity of outlook as the writers in different languages derive their inspiration from a common source and face more or less the same kind of experience, emotional and intellectual.' Histories and surveys of certain Indian literatures, as well as the translations of creative works available in English, reveal unmistakably the like-minded response of our creative writers in the many languages to the thought-currents and forces emanating from common religious, political and social ideas. Many writers seem to operate on the same wavelength, as it were. Yet, an honest student of Indian literature would confess that we have not progressed much beyond the hypothetical stage in our search for a substantial common denominator. In other words, an integrated picture of Indian literature has yet to emerge; we are still only on the road to the discovery of Indian literature as a national entity.

What is most easily understandable is the heterogeneity of our cultural expressions. What is most difficult to comprehend is its unity, which is inward and conceptual. In this difficult journey from the concrete to the abstract, certain analogies might help. Our problem here is to understand how fifteen or more languages can create one literature. How can we reconcile the multiplicity of our languages and the singleness of our literature? A great poet has said that if language is a plant, literature is its flower. Can fifteen plants produce one flower? Fifteen plants, of course, can produce one *kind* of flower. There are several varieties of roses, each with a different hue, fragrance, shape or size, but they are all roses. Can we not view India's different literatures as belonging to the same species though with different colours and aromas? An analogy has its own limitations. However, let us take another. A traditional brass lamp has several wicks jutting out to be lit. The more numerous the wicks, the brighter the light. The lamp is the same, the oil is the same, but it is the wicks that determine the brightness of the light. The lights from the various wicks merge imperceptibly and produce a brightness which is the totality of many lights. Just as many wicks produce one light, India's many languages produce one literature.

Our ideas about 'unity in diversity' are vague and superficial. Though three decades have passed since we became more conscious about our literary heritage and the need for inter-literary traffic, our progress has been limited. No doubt the Sahitya Akademi, the National Book Trust, the All India Radio and a few agencies of a regional character have taken some initial steps in this direction. A few of their publications give readers in the English medium an overall glimpse of Indian literature and also provide compartmentalized surveys. But they have touched only the fringe of a great problem. It is in this context that a comparative study of various Indian literatures assumes great importance.

The process of comparison is a natural function of the brain. When we enjoy or evaluate a work of art, we employ our natural ability to compare the work with similar works we have enjoyed before. In the same manner, when a comparative study of literature is made, a comparison of two or more similar or even dissimilar forms or trends within the literature of the same language or two or more languages of the same country is attempted. Such a study could also cut across national boundaries and compare themes and literary forms or authors in other languages to discover the underlying elements of unity in diversity. Though all these levels are important and all such studies are interrelated, the most important study seems to be the one which undertakes to distinguish and define different national traditions.

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The present title, *Comparative Indian Literature*, may appear somewhat presumptuous, because comparative studies as such are not attempted in these volumes. The surveys, written more with the motive of assisting students of comparative literature, are designed in twelve sections. The first section on 'Languages' is intended as a backdrop for the discussions that follow on the various branches of literature. The last section deals with extra-literary movements and institutions which have fostered literature. In between are ten sections dealing with the more important genres of literature. Each section consists of a general introduction to the particular genre, written by an eminent litterateur, giving pointers to the common as well as the distinctive features of the various literatures. This is followed by surveys of the genre as it has developed in each of the fifteen languages, a specialist in the particular genre of the language contributing the particular survey. Though only fifteen languages have been included for discussion in the general design, literature in English and six other Indian languages recognized by the Sahitya Akademi figure in an annexure with articles covering important genres and highlighting the landmarks.

It is hoped that in addition to making available authentic information on the various Indian literatures, these surveys and critical evaluations will facilitate comparative studies in depth and help students discover the texture of our literatures focusing attention on their common strands and distinctive features. It is also hoped that these volumes will bring the great literatures of India closer to each other.

* * *

Some of our languages are shared by neighbouring countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. At present we do not have *complete* information on the literature in Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Tamil and Urdu since Partition. While Ghalib, Iqbal, Tagore and Nazrul Islam could be claimed by more than one country, the same cannot be said of post-Partition authors. So the political maps of India before and after 1947 were considered the guiding factor, though important works of other countries which have influenced our literatures have been judiciously considered.

The whole range of Indian literature from its beginnings to modern times has been covered. However, while discussing the contemporary period the emphasis has been on trends and movements rather than on personalities. It must be noted that 1970 was suggested as the cut-off date, but this has not been strictly adhered to in many articles.

Trivandrum
September 1983

K. M. GEORGE
Director & Chief Editor

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Acknowledgements

The scheme of preparing a two-volume *Comparative Indian Literature* was originally conceived and proposed by Dr K. M. George. The Government of Kerala, to whom he submitted the scheme, referred it to the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, enquiring whether it would be prepared to take it up for implementation. The Executive Board of the Akademi considered the proposal in detail at its meeting on 26 June 1978 and decided to take it up for implementation, as part of its Silver Jubilee programme. A sub-office of the Akademi to implement the project was set up at Trivandrum and the work began on 1 October 1978.

When the compilation and editing made sufficient headway, the Akademi felt that it was desirable to associate itself with a publishing concern of repute for publishing this reference book and promoting its sale. The choice was not difficult; and we are happy that Macmillan India Limited graciously agreed to be the co-publishers, to thus become partners in this venture of national importance.

Mrs Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India, who inaugurated the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi at Trichur on 10 November 1980, handed over the first part of the manuscript of *Comparative Indian Literature* to Mr R. Narayanaswamy, the Vice-President of Macmillan India Limited. The Madras branch of the Company looked after the technical aspects of production. We are extremely thankful to Mr Narayanaswamy for the great interest he has evinced in this matter. The services of Mrs Mini Krishnan, Editor, Mr Paul George, Production Editor and Mr T. K. Sengupta, Press Manager, deserve special mention. It was their untiring effort and active cooperation that enabled us to bring out the first volume of this work on time.

The credit for organizing and executing the project must go to none other than Dr K. M. George, whose devotion to duty, wide experience in doing such challenging jobs, scholarly disposition, nation-wide contact with writers and scholars, and persevering nature made him the natural choice for the job. The Akademi has drawn heavily on his time and energy to get this project implemented as per schedule and he has worked with single-minded devotion during the past five years.

The Executive Board of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, past and present, has taken a keen interest in the design and progress of this project from the very beginning. The late P. C. Kuttikrishnan (Uroob) was the President of the Akademi when the scheme was taken up in 1978. He died on 10 July 1979. The Government of Kerala appointed Mr Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai as the next President. He continued to be the President of the Akademi when it was reconstituted on 15 April 1981. The Executive Board appointed an Advisory Board for the project from among its members. They have shown great keenness in the working of the scheme. The interest evinced and the encouragement given by the General Council of the Akademi, past and present, also has to be mentioned here.

Our sincere thanks go to the Government of Kerala, especially to the successive chief ministers of the State, without whose help we would not have been able to commence this project and carry out the work. We also thank the universities of Kerala, Cochin and Calicut which registered their interest in the project by giving us token financial assistance.

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It goes without saying that the publishers themselves, or for the matter, the Director and Chief Editor of the project, could not have compiled such an important work without the active cooperation of a large number of distinguished writers and scholars throughout India. They include guest editors, editors in charge of individual languages, contributors and researchers. Their number would come to about two hundred. We have mentioned the names of many of them elsewhere against their work. We may add that the cooperation we received from the fraternity of writers and scholars was invaluable. We also wish to acknowledge the valuable service rendered by Miss Bina Nair both as editorial assistant and as proof-reader, and Mrs Usha Rajagopalan, who functioned as editorial assistant in the early stages of the work. In the final stage of proof-reading, we sought the help of Prof. S. Guptan Nair, a distinguished critic and scholar of Kerala. Happily for us, he readily agreed and helped us through the work.

We are also happy to record the valuable services rendered by the staff of the sub-office at Trivandrum and the main office at Trichur.

During the period of preparation of this volume, enquiries were coming in from different parts of India and outside about its progress. We have also received letters of encouragement from distinguished litterateurs and offers for translating the work into different languages from interested agencies. We thank all those who cooperated with us and encouraged us in this difficult venture.

PAVANAN
Secretary
Kerala Sahitya Akademi

Trichur
September 1983

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Guide to Users

Pronunciation and Transliteration

Though English is the most effective medium for national and international communication, the limited number of letters in its alphabet presents difficulties while dealing with Indian topics. And when one deals with languages and literatures which have developed over the centuries with their own rich sound system, terminologies, not to speak of the large number of authors' names and titles of books, the problem assumes gigantic proportions. However, it can be solved to a considerable extent by employing a system of transliteration using diacritical marks above or below the Roman letters to get the additional sounds (see item [v] below).

It may appear to be an easy solution to give all names and terms not found in the English dictionary by using the transliteration system. But in reality it is not that easy. A perfect solution is out of the question as there are sounds in almost all Indian languages (especially Kashmiri, Urdu and Sindhi) which are not precisely covered by the system. It has therefore been considered practical to get a fair approximation of the pronunciation sufficient to identify the term or name.

Secondly, the proposed system is familiar only to scholars. The common reader still prefers the conventional spelling (e.g. Krishna) with all its vagueness to the form with diacritics (e.g. Kṛṣṇa). As this book is meant both for the scholar and the common reader, a compromise which neither ignores the demands of the scholar nor the convenience of the common reader had to be evolved. The essential points of the scheme are given below:

(i) Names of Authors. Names of Indian authors run into hundreds and a large percentage of them have a religious or caste base, and hence there is considerable repetition though with regional variations. Because of the English system of education which prevailed for a period of over a century, most of these names have attained a conventional spelling. It is better not to tamper with the established spelling of individual authors. Moreover, quite a few of these names have got into English books on Indian subjects with standardized spellings. The following decision has therefore been taken:

> When an author's name appears for the *first* time in an article (considered as an independent unit) both the conventional and the transliterated forms are given, the latter in brackets, e.g. Radhakrishnan (Rādhākṛṣṇan). Thereafter the conventional form alone is given. However, when authors are referred to in a casual manner, the more familiar names are given in conventional form and others in transliteration.

(ii) Titles of Books. Titles of books run into thousands and they are uniformly given in the transliterated form and in italics. In this category conventional spelling has been established only in a few cases. The more important among these like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Quran, Sakuntalam, Gita, Veda, etc. are given without diacritics. It was also felt unnecessary to italicize them. Similarly well-known words like Apabh-

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ramsa, Bhakti, Purana, Saivism, Smriti, and Upanishad have also been accepted in the conventional form.

(iii) Tadbhavas and Tatsamas. While borrowing terms from other languages, especially Sanskrit, some are accepted without any phonetic modifications (*tatsamas*) and others with specific phonetic modifications (*tadbhavas*). Languages do not behave in a uniform manner in this regard. It has therefore been considered inadvisable to stick to a mechanical consistency in the spelling and transliteration of such words and terms. The convention in each language is followed here, by and large. For example,

Ramayana, Ramayan, Ramaen, Ramayanam
Krishna, Krushna, Krishan, Krishnan, Kishen
Karma, Karam, Karmam
Apabhramsa, Apbhramsa, Apabhransa

(iv) Vowels e and o. The four Dravidian languages have both long and short / e / and / o /. The languages of the Indo-Aryan family, by and large, have only the long / e / and long / o /. Without attempting uniformity, the practice in each language is followed here. Therefore, these two letters without diacritics represent long vowels for the Indo-Aryan languages and short vowels for the Dravidian. The bar above them (ē, ō) shows that they represent long vowels of the Dravidian family.

(v) System of Transliteration.

(a) The following system of transliteration with hints on pronunciation may be noted:

Vowels

a	sounds like	*u*	in	c*u*t
ā	,,	*a*	,,	f*a*ther
i	,,	*i*	,,	b*i*t
ī	,,	*ee*	,,	f*ee*l
u	,,	*u*	,,	f*u*ll
ū	,,	*oo*	,,	c*oo*l
ṛ	,,	*r*	,,	sm*r*ti
e	,,	*e*	,,	p*e*t (see [iv] above)
ē	,,	*a*	,,	c*a*ke (,,)
o	,,	*o*	,,	c*o*t (,,)
ō	,,	*au*	,,	c*au*ght (,,)
ai	,,	*i*	,,	m*i*te
au	,,	*ou*	,,	c*ou*nt
ṁ (anusvara)	,,	*m*	,,	so*m*e
ə	,,	*e*	,,	sys*t*em

ḥ—visarga (:) in Sanskrit

Consonants

k	,,	*k*	,,	mar*k*et
g	,,	*g*	,,	*g*et
ṅ	,,	*n*	,,	ba*n*k
c	,,	*ch*	,,	*ch*urch
j	,,	*j*	,,	*j*ust

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ñ	sounds like	*n*	in	hi*n*ge
ṭ	,,	*t*	,,	cur*t*
ḍ	,,	*d*	,,	bir*d*
ṇ	,,	*n*	,,	*o*ne
t	,,	*th*	,,	*th*in
d	,,	*th*	,,	*th*is
n	,,	*n*	,,	*n*agar (dental nasal)
p	,,	*p*	,,	*p*olice
b	,,	*b*	,,	*b*ag
m	,,	*m*	,,	*m*an
y	,,	*y*	,,	*y*es
r	,,	*r*	,,	ve*r*y
l	,,	*l*	,,	*l*ight
v/w	,,	*v*	,,	*v*ery
ś	,,	*s*	,,	*s*atam (one hundred)
ṣ	,,	*sh*	,,	*sh*ould
h	,,	*h*	,,	*h*ot
ṛ	,,	*r*	,,	*r*ight
ṯ (alveolar plosive)	,,	*t*	,,	*t*ea
n′ (alveolar nasal)	,,	*n*	,,	mi*n*e
ḷ (retroflex)	,,	*l*	,,	bar*l*ey
ḻ ,,	,,	*zh*	,,	Ko*zh*ikode

(b) The aspirate sounds (kh, gh, ch, jh...) have not been indicated in the above list as they are clear to anyone familiar with Indian languages. The Tamil alphabet omits the aspirate letters, and uses the same letters to express the voiced and unvoiced sounds.

(c) The same symbol /ṛ/ has been used for the vowel 'ṛ' and the alveolar trill as the context will reveal which is which, e.g. in 'Pṛākṛt' the first 'ṛ' is consonant and the second vowel.

(There is also considerable difficulty in distinguishing the dental nasal 'n' from the alveolar nasal 'n′'. This also will not substantially affect the pronunciation.)

Vowels /a/ and /i/ occurring at the end of certain words are short in some languages and long in others, e.g. Sabha, Lakshmi. The interchange of /v/ and /b/ is noticeable especially in the languages of the Eastern group (e.g. Viṣu—Bihu, Kavi—Kabi).

(d) What is to be avoided is the mixing of conventional and transliterated forms especially as regards the undermentioned sounds:

ch — c	ḍ — ṛ (Khaṛiboli)
th — t	ś — ṣ (Śiva)
th — d	
sh — ṣ	
ee — ī	

Abbreviations

anon.	anonymous
b.	born
c.	circa
cf.	refer
ch.	chapter
d.	died
ed.	editor, edited by, edition

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ibid.	ibidem
no.	number
op. cit.	in the work cited
pseud.	pseudonym
pt.	part
pub.	publication, published
sing.	singular
tr.	translator, translated by, translation
univ.	university
UGC	University Grants Commission

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Section 1

LANGUAGE

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Introduction

K. M. GEORGE

India with an area as large as Europe without Russia, and a population forming a fifth of the human race is a land of many languages. The extent of linguistic heterogeneity can be gauged from the number of mother tongues recorded by various authorities. Even here the figures are somewhat confusing. Sir George Grierson in *Linguistic Survey of India* (1903–28) has listed 225 main languages. The Census of 1961 gives a bewildering figure of 1652, because it has recorded even small dialects spoken by five persons or less. The 1971 Census gives a more realistic figure of 700, having taken into account only the dialects spoken by 1000 people and above. This too is a staggering figure. These languages belong to four major speech families—the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Sino-Tibetan (or Mongoloid), and the Austric. There might even be dialects, not properly identified, which do not belong to these major 'language-culture' groups. According to Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Indian civilization has elements from all these groups, and basically it is pre-Aryan, with important Aryan modifications within as well as Aryan superstructure at the top (see Preface to *The Cultural Heritage of India*, vol. V, p. xix). Though the languages vary considerably in structure and vocabulary, they have influenced each other profoundly, especially the Aryan and the Dravidian, and they do possess certain common characteristics which may be called specifically Indian. While the multiplicity of language creates certain problems for the nation-state, their variety and richness add to the grandeur of the mosaic. And it is for us to discover the fascinating design in this multicoloured mosaic.

The approach to the problem could be made more rational by working out the number of languages/dialects spoken by 5000 persons and above as shown below:

Indo-Aryan	124
Dravidian	30
Sino-Tibetan	73
Austric	23
Unclassified	9
Total	259

Even this may appear an unwieldy number when we consider the solidarity of a nation. But what really matters is the languages used by the large civilized groups in this vast geographical area. There are about 400 tribal languages spoken by small groups of people in the hill tracts and jungle areas. They are usually confined to a narrow existence; but the more educated among them cultivate one or the other of the major languages. After taking into consideration the numerical, commercial, political and cultural importance, the Government of India have approved 15 major languages.

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The relative position of the scheduled languages of India population-wise as per 1971 Census is given below. (Census figures for 1981 have not been published.)

Languages	*Total speakers*	*Percentage total*	*Rank*
1. Assamese	89,58,977	1·63	12
2. Bengali	4,47,92,722	8·17	2
3. Gujarati	2,58,75,252	4·72	7
4. Hindi	16,25,77,612	29·67	1
5. Kannada	2,17,07,918	3·96	9
6. Kashmiri	24,38,360	0·44	13
7. Malayalam	2,19,38,231	4·00	8
8. Marathi	4,22,51,207	7·71	4
9. Oriya	1,98,55,450	3·62	10
10. Punjabi	1,64,49,573	3·00	11
11. Sanskrit	2,212	—	15
12. Sindhi	16,76,728	0·31	14
13. Tamil	3,76,90,020	6·88	5
14. Telugu	4,47,52,926	8·17	3
15. Urdu	2,86,07,874	5·22	6
Others	6,83,74,747	12·50	
Total	54,79,49,809		

As per the 1961 Census, Telugu had the second place (3,76,68,132) and Bengali, the third place (3,38,88,939). Similarly Kannada had the eighth place (1,74,15,827) and Malayalam the ninth place (1,70,15,782). Such reversals in rank happen in the case of languages with close population figures.

The 15 languages referred to above come under two large families, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian. They are listed below with their conventional spelling in English and Roman transliteration indicating the precise pronunciation:

I. Indo-Aryan

Assamese	Āssāmīs	Eastern
Bengali	Beṅgāḷi	Eastern
Oriya	Oṛiya	Eastern
Marathi	Maṛāṭhi	Western
Gujarati	Gujarāti	Western
Punjabi (Panjabi)	Pañjābi	North Central
Kashmiri	Kaśmīri	North Central
Hindi	Hindi	Spoken in six states in central and upper India
Sindhi	Sindhi	No geographical concentration
Urdu	Urdu	No geographical concentration

II. Dravidian

Kannada	Kannaḍa	Karnataka
Malayalam	Malayāḷam	Kerala
Tamil	Tamiḷ	Tamil Nadu
Telugu	Telugu	Andhra Pradesh

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The above account can only indicate a general dispersal of the prominent languages. Even though the state boundaries are carved on the basis of dominant languages, all the states continue to be multilingual with several minority languages. It is interesting to note that the minority languages range from about 5 per cent to 85 per cent. (Kerala: 95 per cent Malayalam and 5 per cent other languages; Nagaland: 15 per cent Konyak and 85 per cent other languages). And when the country is taken as a whole, even Hindi which can claim as high a population as 30 per cent is also a minority language. However, Hindi has a pre-eminent place in the national set-up, as the official language of the Union of India and as the most natural inter-provincial link among the speakers of the different Aryan languages. Urdu, Punjabi and Gujarati in particular are very close to Hindi. Even in South India, the home of the Dravidian tongues, a working knowledge of spoken Hindi is not unusual in the major cities. Hindi can thus be described as the emerging link language of India, while English continues to be the effective link, though superimposed during the British regime. However, one should not forget the role played by Sanskrit for centuries as the traditional connecting link and the medium of the erudite and the elite throughout the country.

Even though about 2000 people have claimed Sanskrit as their mother tongue according to census figures, it cannot be equated with any modern Indian language; its role has been and is different. Sanskrit has functioned as the most powerful formative agency and integrating force from the very beginning of Indian history and civilization. Spoken Sanskrit (by whatever name it has been called) is the fountain from which the languages of Aryan India had originally sprung; the principal portion of their vocabulary and their inflectional system being derived from this source. Even the Dravidian languages which have a considerably different morphological system are indebted to Sanskrit in the realms of vocabulary and phonology, with the partial exception of Tamil. Actually, there is no important language or literature in India which has not been influenced and enriched by Sanskrit and its great literature. Traditional Indian culture cannot be properly understood without the help of Sanskrit. This has been well recognized by Orientalists; but the complementary role played by ancient Tamil works representing the Dravidian stock has not been appreciated as much as it should have been It may also be noted that the position of Kashmiri in the Aryan family is somewhat different from those of the other members. It belongs to the Dardic branch within the Indo-Aryan family. Although Dardic in origin, it grew up under the profound influence of Sanskrit and the later Prakrits.

The quiet role played by Sanskrit in maintaining the cultural and thereby the political unity of India cannot be overemphasized. This unity has been strengthened more obviously during the past one hundred years by the English language and its great literature. The 19th century Renaissance and the consequent efflorescence of modern Indian literatures was the salutary result of this contact. Even in the realm of language the influence of English has been considerable. Every Indian language has borrowed words from English running into a few thousands. This has been necessary to communicate modern ideas in these languages. Their sound system, morphological features and even syntax have been influenced by English to a noticeable extent. This also has resulted in producing common features.

Indians have made their own contribution to the English language, a great vehicle of world culture. The National Sahitya Akademi has recognized this by approving it for its programmes. It has also approved the following as independent literary languages: Maithili, Rajasthani, Manipuri, Dogri, Konkani and Nepali which have literatures of their own. Brief accounts of these languages also appear at the end of the present work.

Apart from the dominant influence of Sanskrit and the pervasive influence of English brought to bear on these languages, which show certain common characteristics, there are others, which may be termed specifically Indian, applicable to most languages under discussion, viz. (1) the celebral or retroflex sounds of ṭ, ḍ, ṛ, ṇ, and ḷ, (2) the use of post

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positions in the declension of the noun, (3) the use of two pronouns for the first person plural, the one including, the other excluding, the party addressed, and (4) points of similarity in the structure of the verb, like the formation of verbal tenses by means of participles. The syntax is also considerably similar and the normal word order is subject, object, verb.

Another important characteristic refers to the visual representation of the sounds. By and large, the Indian languages are phonetic, each sound having a separate script. Even in languages like Tamil where there is a paucity of characters, there exists a system or convention by which a symbol will have, in addition, a related but different sound in a new position (e.g. the same consonant appears as a surd in the beginning of a word and as a sonant in the middle). Thus the problem of spelling and pronunciation applicable to Indo-European languages like English has been practically eliminated. Though the wealth of characters is an advantage, it poses problems for mechanization and development of printing technology.

The script system used by the major languages of India has developed from a single source: 'Brahmi'. The earliest Brahmi inscriptions are those belonging to the reign of Asoka (272–232 B.C.). The changes undergone are so vast and varied that it would be difficult to identify the resemblances. The major script systems are:

Nagari (Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi)
Gujarati
Gurumukhi (Punjabi)
Bengali, Assamese and Manipuri (with minor variations)
Oriya
Telugu and Kannada (with minor variations)
Tamil
Malayalam

The Perso-Arabic script with certain modifications is used by Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri. The writing is from right to left except for numbers. The Roman script is also used by certain languages in India (Urdu, Konkani, etc.) as an additional visual medium.

Though script is only a visual symbol to represent sounds and has little to do with the structure and vocabulary which give an identity to each language, a purely rational discussion on script reform or script unification is beset with difficulties. There is so much emotion attached to a form of writing which has been in use for centuries that any attempt at reform is challenged seriously.

* * *

What follows in this section is a brief historical survey of the origin, the formation and development of the 15 major languages envisaged under the scheme. The special features of the vocabulary, phonology, morphology and syntax of each language are indicated. But the discussion will be only in general terms as the section is intended only as a backdrop for the discussion on literature which follows.

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Assamese

UPENDRANATH GOSWAMI

Assam and Assamese

The word *Assamese* is an English one based on the word *Assam*, by which the tract consisting of the Brahmaputra valley is known. But the people themselves call their state *asam* and their language *asamīyā*. The word *Assam* was connected with the Shan invaders of the Brahmaputra valley. Since 1228 the easternmost part of the valley came under the domination of a section of the great Thāi (*Tāi*) or Shan race. While the Shan invaders called themselves *Tāi*, they came to be referred to as *Āsām*, *Āsam*, *Asam*, and *Acam* by the natives of the province as recorded in the early Assamese literature. The modern Assamese word *Āhom* goes back to early Assamese Āsām; Āsām>Āsam >Āham>Āhom. The word *Asam* was first applied to the Shans and subsequently to the country they conquered, viz. the region east of the present district of Kāmrūp. Its use was afterwards expanded as it included the whole of the Brahmaputra valley when the province was constituted by the British in 1874 (cf. *Assamese: Its Formation and Development* by B. Kakati). Assamese is the easternmost New Indo-Aryan Language and is spoken by about 9 million people mostly in the Brahmaputra valley. It is also spoken in Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. In Arunachal, Assamese is the only language for mutual communication among the different language speakers. In Nagaland, a mixed form of Assamese serves as the lingua franca.

Origin and History

Assamese is a Magadhan speech. Coming from the regions of Videha-Magadha through North Bengal, it entered Kāmarūpa, or Western Assam, where this speech was first described as Assamese. Sir G. A. Grierson felt that Magadhi was the common source of all the eastern dialects. According to him, it developed into Northern Bengali and Assamese in the North-East, into Oriya in the South and into Bengali in the area between the two. S. K. Chatterji divides Eastern Magadhi Prākrit and Apabhraṁśa into four dialect groups, viz. Rāḍha, Varendra, Kāmarūpa and Vaṅga. They are 'all related to one another as having emanated from one centre of radiation and yet following their own lines of development'. The standard Assamese and especially its dialects preserve a good number of important phonological and morphological points of agreement among the Magadhan languages; such as the use of the epenthetic -i-, pleonastic -ā, the loss of case-endings—especially the absence of the ablative ending, the replacement of locative for the dative-accusative, past base -l-, future base -b-, etc.

The earliest reference to the Assamese language is found in the remarks of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang (7th century). The copper-plate inscriptions of the Hindu kings of Kāmarūpa, from between the 6/7th and 12th centuries, give, for the first time, some idea of the language and its forms in their formative stages. These inscriptions record the Kāmarūpa Prākṛt and date the antiquity of the Assamese language to a very remote period of its history. But they do not furnish the grammatical structure of Kāmrūpī or Assamese, for which we have to turn to the songs of the Buddhist Siddhācāryās, known as *Caryās*, composed between the 8th and 12th centuries. Apart from 'certain phonological and morphological peculiarities', many words and certain rules of Assamese word-order are registered in these songs and they 'have come down in an unbroken continuity through early to modern Assamese'.

The first literary form in Assamese was the *Caryā* songs. There is also in Assam a large mass of popular songs composed by unlettered rustic bards and handed down from generation to generation. There are also nursery songs and pastoral ballads. But Assamese literature in the strict sense of the term came into existence only in the latter part of the 13th century. The earliest Assamese poets on record are Hema Sarasvati and Haribar Vipra. The outstanding poet of the early period of Assamese literature is Mādhava Kandalī who rendered the entire Ramayana into Assamese verse in the 14th century. The language of the Ramayana of Mādhava Kandalī is of great importance as

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it is intimately related with the language of *Śrīkṛṣṇakīrtana*, which, after the *Caryā* songs is considered to be the next specimen of Bengali. This establishes firmly the relationship of the Assamese language to the language of Mithila, as the *Caryā* songs are also considered the earliest specimens of Maithili written in its north-eastern dialect.

The Assamese language consists of two currents. The present-day Kāmrūpī dialect constitutes the main current, flowing from one end of the state to the other. It is in the Kāmrūpī language that early Assamese literature was mainly written. The Kāmrūpī dialect bears a close relationship to the Goālparīyā dialect of Goālpārā in Western Assam and also to the language of North Bengal. Kāmrūpī forms resemble Bhojpuri (the westernmost speech of the eastern or Magadhan group of the Aryan languages of India), Awadhi, Marathi, Konkani, Nepali and even Punjabi. This kind of relationship links Assamese with other Indo-Aryan languages and indicates that the main current of the Assamese language flows from the west. The other current of the Assamese language is the present-day Standard Colloquial, based on the dialect of Eastern Assam. This current is not confined to upper Assam only. It is to be found in Western Assam as well as the western portion of the ancient Kāmarūpā kingdom.

There is a close relationship between the Standard Assamese and the language of the *Caryā* songs. Moreover, it is interesting to find some words in Bhojpuri which are used, almost in the same form and meaning, in early and modern Assamese, e.g. dharam < dharma (E. As. dharama), janam < janma (E. As. janama), padum < padma (Mod. As. padum), duwār < dvāra (Mod. As. duwār), etc. The dialect forming the basis of the second current, viz. the dialect of Eastern Assam, differs considerably from the Kāmrūpī dialect representing the main current. The word-stress in the Kāmrūpī dialect is dominantly initial as opposed to the penultimate stress of the Standard Colloquial. There is a predominance of high vowels as opposed to the mid-vowels of the Standard Colloquial. As the medial vowels are rarely pronounced, the consonants always come in contact with each other in the Kāmrūpī dialect. But 'within the limit of a word there is hardly anything like contact of consonants in the Standard Colloquial'. The plural suffixes in Kāmrūpī are completely different from those of the Standard Colloquial. A great variety of adverbial formations found in the Kāmrūpī dialect are different in the Standard Colloquial. The habit of forming verbs from nouns is greater in Kāmrūpī than in the Standard Colloquial. Glossarial differences are also considerable in the two varieties of Assamese.

Formation of the Standard Language

The formation of 'common languages, as well as their development and disintegration, are regulated by historical causes'. This is true in the case of Assamese as well. With the decline of the Koch power by the 17th century, the centre of literary importance shifted from Western Assam to the Ahom Court in Eastern Assam. The Ahoms ruled in Assam up to the end of the first quarter of the 19th century. In 1826 Assam passed into the hands of the East India Company and ten years later, two remarkable members of the American Baptist Mission first set foot in Assam. The missionaries made Sibsagar the centre of their activities and used the dialect of Sibsagar for their literary purposes. They started a monthly magazine, published Assamese grammars and dictionaries. Thus, the tradition of the Ahom Court, supported by the mission, established the language of Eastern Assam as the literary language of the entire province. In other words, the eastern variety of Assamese attained literary and cultural supremacy over other varieties of the language.

Dialects

Assamese may be broadly divided into Eastern and Western Assamese. Western Assamese may again be classified into two dialects, the dialect of Goālpārā, spoken in Goālpārā district, and the Kāmrūpī dialect spoken in the district of Kāmrūp. The Goālparīyā dialect may conveniently be divided into Eastern Goālparīyā and Western Goālparīyā. The Western Goālparīyā dialect occupies a distinct position among the dialects of the Assamese language as it preserves many phonemes which are absent in the Standard as well as in the Kāmrūpī dialect. This form of Assamese speech is closely linked with early Assamese and the Kāmrūpī dialect. The consonant phonemes of this dialect are 29 in number. The phoneme /x/ (a post-velar voiceless spirant) of Standard Assamese and the Kāmrūpī dialect, which is frequently used in both, is absent here. On the other hand, the phonemes of this dialect, *c*, *ch*, *j*, *jh*, *ś*, *ṭ*, *ṭh*, *ḍ*, *ṛ*, *ḍh* are absent in Standard Assamese and in the Kāmrūpī dialect. The dialect possesses the definitive suffixes *-ṭā*, *-jhāk*, *-pāl*, the plural suffix *gulān/ -gulā*, the negative particle *nā-*, etc., e.g. *mānuś -ṭā* (the man), *hāti-ṭā* (the elephant), *pokhi-jhāk*, *pokhi-pāl* (the flock of birds), *mānsi-gulān*, *-gulā* (men), *cɛṅrā-gulān/-gulā* (boys), *nā-hai* (is not) *nā-śunun* (do not hear). Some peculiar vocables of the dialect are: *leṭu* (tail), *pokhi* (bird), *carāi* (cock), *hāṭu* (knee), *śoru* (thin), *śit* (dew), *cān* (moon), *nin* (sleep), *guā* (betel-nut), *mui* (I), *tui* (you), *tomrā* (you) (hon), *uāi* (he, she), etc. (Symbol ɛ is a phoneme peculiar to the language and approximates e.)

Assamese, Bengali and Oriya

Although there are certain similarities to be found in Assamese, Bengali and Oriya, there are also considerable differences. In comparison with Bengali, Assamese differs

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in the formation and addition of the case-affixes, in the formation of the present participles, the conditional past and the infinitive. Assamese has a complete set of negative conjugation with the negative particle *na-* placed before verb roots. The plural suffixes in Assamese are entirely different from those of Bengali. Assamese pronominal derivatives of time and place seem to have no parallel formations in Bengali. Some of the morphological differences between Assamese and Oriya are: (a) in Oriya there can be no notion of plurality unless the verb be in the plural number—this is not the case in Assamese; (b) in Oriya there is an ablative case-affix—Assamese does not possess this; (c) the process of forming echo-words in Oriya is also different to that of Assamese.

The Script

It may be said that the Assamese script is a descendant of the Gupta script of Eastern India. It developed out of the characters preserved in the stone and copper-plate inscriptions. In the copper-plate grants are to be found, along with Brahmi and Gupta or Kuṭila characters, some Assamese characters used almost in their present forms. In the Kāṇāi-baraśi Rock inscription there are to be found specimens of a few Assamese characters almost in their present forms. It is evident, therefore, that Assamese characters had assumed more or less their present forms at least at the beginning of the 12th century. The characters of the Kāṇāi-baraśī Rock inscription give some clue to the gradual transition from the Gupta-Kuṭila to the early Assamese script, which was marked by four styles and which, in the process of time, merged into one, producing a common script.

The Structure

As regards the structure, Assamese possesses certain distinct characteristics in phonology, morphology and syntax. There are eight vowel phonemes in Assamese. The vowels are voiced. Length and stress are non-phonemic in the language but nasality is phonemic. There are 21 consonant phonemes in the language. The consonants include twelve stops, three nasals, one lateral, one trill and four spirants. The stops show voice-voiceless and aspirated-unaspirated contrasts. The nasals, the lateral and the trill are all voiced. The spirants show voice-voiceless contrasts. In writing, 21 consonant phonemes are represented by several letters. So, there has been a vast gap between actual pronunciation and actual writing. The vowel and consonant phonemes of Assamese are: /i, e, ɛ, ā, a, a′, o, u; p, ph, b, bh, t, th, d, dh, k, kh, g, gh, m, n, ṅ, l, r, s, z, x, h/.

Assamese is a language of suffixes. There are few prefixes, and fewer infixes. There are certain special features in Assamese morphology. One of them is the addition of definitive suffixes. They carry the value of the definite article 'the' and are morphologically conditioned, e.g. *kalam-to* (the pen), *pensil-dāl* (the pencil), *hāti-to* (the elephant), *mākhi-to* (the fly). To express the force of the indefinite article 'a', the definite suffixes are used with ɛ-<ɛk (one) prefixed to them, e.g. *ɛ-khan kāpor* (a piece of cloth). By the addition of *-mān* after the definitive suffixes the indefinite sense is conveyed, e.g. *kitāp-du-khan-mān* (two books or so), *mānuh-du-zan-mān* (two people or so).

Another thing to be noticed is the use of the words of relationship which take on different suffixes according to the relationship indicated with the first, the second or the third persons, e.g., my father, *mor deutā*, your (inf.) father, *tor deutā-r*, your (hon.) father, *tomār deutā-r-ā* his father, *tār deutā-k*. The use of certain verbal post-positions to denote certain emphasis or to express certain shades of meaning is again to be noted, e.g. *tumi āhibā* (you come), *tumi āhibā dei* (you will please come), *mai zano-ō* (I know), *mai zan-o-to* (I know indeed). In Assamese, after the addition of suffixes some morpho-phonemic changes occur to the roots. Some of the morpho-phonemic changes are predictable while some are not. Normally, Assamese sentences are simple. Complex ideas are expressed by combining sentences using conjunctions. In a simple sentence the normal order is subject-verb, or subject-object-verb. In certain patterns of sentences the verb or the subject is left out.

Vocabulary

The Assamese vocabulary consists mainly of *tatsama*, *ardhatatsama*, *tadbhava*, *deśī* words, words from other Indo-Aryan languages and Perso-Arabic tongues as well as from English and other European languages. Words have also been borrowed from non-Indo-Aryan Austric, Tibeto-Burman and Tai languages. A considerable number of onomatopoeic words form a part of the Assamese vocabulary. But the borrowing of English words is mainly cultural. The place names ending with *-zuli*, as in Dhekiazuli (Ḍhekīyāzuli), and the river names ending with *-alu*, as in Bharalu, are considered Dravidian. Some other words of Dravidian origin are *puzā* (worship), *āi* (smallpox), *urukh* (to leak), *sinā* (small), *teur* (epilepsy), etc. Some loan words in Assamese are given below: *kārtiz* (cartouche), *turup* (troef), *āsār* (pickles), *gudām* (godown), *batal* (bottle), *bālti* (bucket), *nilām* (auction), *sāh* (tea), *seni* (sugar), *kesā* (raw), *thik* (right), *thikā* (contract), *mihi* (smooth), *rumāl* (handkerchief), *kāgaz* (paper), *kharas* (expenditure), *golāp* (rose), *sāndā* (subscription), *dokān* (shop), *naram* (soft), *zarur* (certainly), *kāziā* (quarrel), *sābon* (soap), *nakal* (copy), *lās* (corpse), *kēsi* (scissors), *aphis* (office), *pulis* (police), *rel* (rail), *tikat* (ticket), *teligrām* (telegram), *teliphon* (telephone), *photo* (photo), *dāktar* (doctor), *phārmāsi* (pharmacy), *kot* (coat), *pent* (pantaloon), *skul* (school), *kalez* (college),

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bens (bench), *tebul* (table), *bɛŋk* (bank), *sek* (cheque), *phutbal* (football), *bha'li* (volley), *kābou* (supplication), *khaṅ* (anger), *mugā* (silk, cotton), *lātum* (spinning top), *gohāri* (petition for help), *pāhār* (hill), *bagā* (white), *diṅi* (neck), *gāha'ri* (pig), *dalaṅ* (bridge), *moidām* (a burial mound).

Non-Aryan Influences

The non-Aryan languages, apart from supplying some vocables, have also influenced the Assamese language, in its phonology and morphology thus:

(i) the loss of distinction between the cerebrals and pure dentals, both being substituted by alveolars;
(ii) the alveolarization of the palatal affricates of c, ch to s and of j, jh to z;
(iii) the change of s to h and then to x;
(iv) the phenomenon of spontaneous nazalisation;
(v) the origin of the definitives, the personal affixes to nouns of relationship and the formation of the negatives;
(vi) the use of compound verbs;
(vii) the omission of the copula, etc.

Thus, the Assamese language presents an excellent example of a composite cultural pattern.

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Bengali

PABITRA SARKAR

General Description

Bengali, barring Assamese, is the easternmost extension of the New Indo-Aryan (NIA) family of languages, most of which are located in North India. The NIA languages and their prior historical forms, Old Indo-Aryan (OIA, i.e., Vedic and Classical Sanskrit) and Middle Indo-Aryan (MIA, i.e., Pali, the Prākṛts and Apabhraṁśas), had evolved from the Indo-Iranian or 'Aryan' branch of the Indo-European, the *ursprache* or ultimate linguistic predecessor from which such disparate languages like Irish, English, German, Greek, Russian, Persian, etc. derived. Closer home, Bengali is sandwiched between sister languages—Oriya, Magadhi, Maithili, etc. on her west and Assamese on the east. Also flanking her, and often intermeshing with her are several non-Aryan languages—Santali, Mundari and Khasi of the Austric family, besides languages like Kachari, Bodo, Garo, Tipra, etc. of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the Tibeto-Chinese. Bengali is the language of former undivided Bengal and its outlying areas. Although the exact number of native Bengali speakers is not easy to determine, that of those residing in India, i.e. in West Bengal, Tripura and Kachar district of Assam (where it is the official language) as well as of other areas, has been given in the 1971 census as 3,38,88,279. Bangladesh, where Bengali is the national language, has approximately 75 million speakers. That puts the total Bengali speaking population in the neighbourhood of 110 million and elevates it to the seventh position, or higher, from the ninth position it held in 1961 (*Anthropological Linguistics*, vol. 3, no. 8) as one of the most widely spoken languages of the world.

Dialects

Bengali has five regional dialects. The foremost among these, Rāṛhī, spoken in lower West Bengal, forms the basis of

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Standard Colloquial Bengali (SCB) which is the standard dialect used in most of the prose literature now produced in both West Bengal and Bangladesh, in newspapers as well as over the radio and television. This is the dialect that the educated Bengalis in all these areas use in classroom instruction, public addresses and other such contexts. In general conversation, this dialect is held to be the intellectual norm to which the educated community outside the Rāṛhī area attempts to conform.[1] The other dialects are Bāṅgālī or East Bengali, Varendrī or North Bengali, Kāmrūpī or North-Western Bengali and Jhāṛkhaṇḍī or South-Western Bengali. The South-Eastern subdialect of the Chittagong-Noakhali region has more valid claims to be regarded as an independent dialect, than, say Jhāṛkhaṇḍī, but linguists have so far been reluctant to accord it such a status.[2] There is one literary (prose) dialect, the Sādhu Bhāṣā or the High Bengali,[3] that enjoyed a century and a half of vigorous growth till it began to yield to SCB.[4] Now its use as a literary medium is very marginal. By the fifties of the 20th century, the poetical dialect which can be called the Sādhu dialect of Bengali poetry, has similarly been replaced by one that is modelled after SCB. As for the social dialects of Bengali, little has been investigated so far that merits a closer look.

History

Bengali-Assamese came apart from Oriya and other eastern Magadhan languages and attained independent recognition as a language around the 10th century, a period when almost all other NIA languages came into their own. Assamese branched off before the turn of the 15th century. The oldest extant text of Bengali[5] is the *Caryāpadas*, a collection of some 47 songs composed by a group of mystics belonging to a sect of Tantric Buddhism. The style that carries these songs is esoteric and allegory-ridden, hence there are still many phrases that defy explanation. The language of the *Caryāpadas* represents the Old Bengali (OB) whose later limits extend up to the end of the 12th century. Another text, *Śrīkṛṣṇa kīrtan*, faithfully retains specimens of Bengali that were putatively spoken during the 14th and 15th centuries and which in part, constitute the Early Middle Bengali period. The same period also covers the earlier, i.e., the 13th century, but we have not received any linguistic (or literary) material assignable to it. Late Middle Bengali spans the period 1500–1800 and has witnessed the great flowering of Vaiṣṇava lyrics, and the *Maṅgal Kāvyas* and other narrative poems. The Modern Bengali period begins in the late 18th century and is marked by the growth of prose literature. Instead of overwhelming the reader with a profusion of historical details, I quote below (from Chatterji, 1962, pp. 28–29) the various forms which a specimen Bengali sentence may have taken in its evolution through different stages:

(i) *Modern Bengali* (1936)
gān geye nā beye ke āśe pāre
'song singing, boat rowing who comes to-the-shore'
'Who is it approaching the shore rowing his boat, with a song in his lips?'

(ii) *Middle Bengali* (1500)
gān gāi(h)ae nāo bāi(h)ae ke āiśe(āiśśe) pāre

(iii) *Old Bengali* (c. 1100)
gāṇa gāhia nāwa bāhia ke āiśai pārahi

(iv) *Māgadhan Apabhraṁśa* (Eastern) (c. 700)
*gāṇa gāhia nāba bāhia *kai (*ki) āwiśai pārahi (pālahi)*

(v) *Māgadhī: prākṛt* (c. 200)
*gāṇaṃ gādhia (gādhittā) nāwaṃ vāhia (vāhitta) *kage (*kae* or *ke) āwiśadi *pāladhi (pale)*
and so on.

The Grammar

The nominal system of Bengali grammar is much simpler than that of other Indian languages. The language has no 'grammatical' gender or number. That is, verbs or adjectives do not display any number/gender agreement with the noun. The suffixes that are traditionally termed 'plural' or 'feminine' are indicators of group specificity and female counterparts (of a profession) respectively as semantic features. Only three cases are morphologically relevant—Dative, Genitive and Locative, while the rest of the case relationships are carried either without any suffix, or by a set of words called 'post-positions', whose use makes the language more analytic than inflexional.

The verb system, however, is a little complicated and needs, apart from the 'neutralized' or shared forms, some 43 finite forms to express the full range of meaning-network that can be obtained in the language. The non-finite verbal forms that are productive are four in number and lend themselves to nominal, participal, adverbial, conjunctival and other such uses. Bengali verbs are further divided into simple and phrasal verbs. The latter have two types of realisation: (a) Conjunct Verbs, or verbs with the shape—Noun/Adjective+Verb, and (b) Compound Verbs having the shape—Non-finite+Finite verb. While the conjunct verbs are just a means of filling up the semantic gaps created by the absence of certain verbal roots, the compound verbs make up for the absence of suffixes that could carry the finer distinctions of certain aspects, modality, deixis, ergativity, causation, volition/non-volition, etc.

In its optimum canonical form, a Bengali finite verb may have the following arrangement, items in parentheses being restricted in application:

Stem+(Causative/Denominative Suffix)+(Aspect Suffix)+(Tense Suffix)+Personal Ending.

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All other suffixes have invariant shapes, except for the personal ending which agrees with the five persons that Bengali has, i.e. First, Second Ordinary, Second Intimate, Third Ordinary and Second/Third Honorific. The aspects are Continuative and Completive, while the Past Tense has an extra aspect, Habitual. The tenses are Present, Past and Future. Imperative forms can be cross-classified as Present and Future Imperatives as well as Second Person and Third Person Imperatives.

The derivational morphology of Bengali is rather poor. In syntax, the typical order of elements in a sentence is SOV (Subject+Object+Verb). The unmarked order of an expanded sentence is as follows:

Subj.+Time Adverbial+Place Adverbial+Ind. Obj.+Dir. Obj.+Verb.

There is a class of 'verbless' sentences in which the verb 'Be' in present Indicative (Simple) Tense is deleted (He is good→He good). In collocation, adjectives and adverbs precede nouns and verbs respectively. Sentence nominalization figures in many of the transformations. There are various ways of compounding and embedding sentences for indicating disjunction, dependency, causation or just linear adjunction as relationship between two propositions.

Vocabulary. The literate speech is replete with loan words from Sanskrit and English in which alone can occur consonant clusters, absent in the *tadbhava* level of the language. Chatterji's (1926) word-count from Jnanendra Mohan Das's Bengali dictionary (*Bāṅglā Bhāṣār Abhidhān*) presents the following picture:

Native Words (*tadbhavas*, *semi-tatsamas*) and *tadbhava* borrowings from sister-speeches	51.45
Tatsama or Sanskrit Words	44.00
Foreign Words (Persian)	3.30
(English, Portuguese, etc.)	1.25

Dictionary entries, however, do not reflect the occurrence and frequency of words in actual speech situations, and a count on the basis of the latter will no doubt show considerable deviations from the above data.

Script. Bengali script derives from the eastern variety of Brāhmī script that was called the Kuṭila script which took a distinctive form around the 7th century. This script has evolved over the centuries as it has been widely used in manuscripts and acquired a somewhat cursive form. An Englishman, Charles Wilkins (1749/50–1836) first made printing types of Bengali letters and these were used in Nathaniel Brassey Halhed's (1751–1830) book *A Grammar of the Bengal Language* (1778). The printing types eventually acquired a more angular look, with sharper turns and edges.

NOTES

1. See Chowdhury, Munier, 'The Language Problem of East Pakistan' in Ferguson, Charles A. and Gumperz, John J. (eds.), *Linguistic Diversity in South Asia, International Journal of American Linguistics*, vol. 26, no. 3, July 1960, pp. 64–78.
2. See Ucida, Norihiko, *Der Bengali Dialekt von Chittagong*, Viesbaden, 1970, Otto Harrassowitz.
3. See Dimock, Edward C., 'Literary and Colloquial Bengali in Modern Bengali Prose' in Ferguson and Gumperz (eds.), op. cit., pp. 43–63.
4. Pramatha Chowdhury (1868–1946) led the revolt against Sādhu Bhāṣā in his journal *Sabuj Patra* (first published in 1914) and had Tagore's active support in this. The Bengali newspapers made a complete switch to SCB only in 1961, to mark Tagore's birth centenary. The main editorials, however, continue to be written in Sādhu Bhāṣā.
5. As is well known, various languages have staked their claims on the *Caryāpadas*. Rahul Samkrtyayan has advocated Hindi's case in his book on Buddhism in Tibet. For other languages, see Jha (1958, p. 32) for Maithili, Mansinha (1962, pp. 22–27) for Oriya and Kakati (1941) for Assamese.

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Gujarati

K. K. SHASTREE

The Word 'Gujarati'

A Sanskrit word 'Gurjaratrā' and its Prakrit form 'Gujjarattā' are found in the inscriptions of the 10th century. 'Guzrāt', mentioned in the book *Al-Hind*, written by the Arab traveller Alberuni in the early 11th century, means the country of the people called *Guzr*.

The modern word 'Gujarāti' is an adjectival form of 'Gujarāt' and means 'pertaining to Gujarāt'. The people as well as the language are called 'Gujarāti'. The word 'Gujarāt', the accepted name of the present state, was originally the name for the tract between Mt. Abu and modern Jaipur in western Rajasthan. From the latter half of the 10th century, at the beginning of the Chaulukya (i.e. Solanki) regime, the name 'Gujarāt' was given to the country south of Mt. Abu the old Sārasvata Maṇḍala and the present North Gujarat. Under the Muslim Sultanate, in the 15th century, Gujarat's southern boundary touched the present Thane district (Maharashtra). Though the name Gujarat is today accepted for the whole state, including Saurashtra and Kutch, the people of the state call only the mainland 'Gujarāt'. Saurashtra, in the mid-west and Kutch in the upper west are considered separate territorial entities.

Gujarāti, one of the modern languages of the Indo-Aryan family, is used all over Gujarat in its standard form. It has, however, a number of dialects spoken in different parts of mainland Gujarat as well as in Saurashtra. In Kutch, the spoken language is 'Kutchi' (a sister language of Sindhi) which has not less than 17 dialect-varieties.

Language Origins

The Gujarāti language evolved from the primary Indo-Aryan tongue preserved in the text of *Ṛgveda*, through the primary, middle and third Prakrit stages. The third stage, known as *Apabhraṁśa*, had not less than 27 provincial variations, one of them being 'Gurjara', which was prevalent in that part of India where a nomadic tribe of the same name had established its rule between the 6th and 8th centuries. This part was western Rajasthan, or the Marwar of a later period. Bhinmal was its capital. A branch of this tribe ruled the southern part of modern Gujarat.

'Gujarāti' evolved from the *Gurjara Apabhraṁśa* around the 10th century. The *Gurjara Apabhraṁśa* shared a place with other dialects in this part of the country. Among other dialects were Mewātī in Bikaner, Ḍhūḍhāṛī around modern Jaipur, Hādautī in the Kotah and Ratlam areas, Mārwāṛī in middle Rajasthan (these four areas being in Rajasthan), and Nimāṛī in the land of the Nimar in Khandesh (Maharashtra) and in the border land of Madhya Pradesh adjoining Maharashtra. When the Chaulukya dynasty captured the country beyond Mt. Abu in the 10th century, the dialect which they brought with them, was not too different from the dialect that dominated what is now the State of Gujarat. The great grammarian Acharya Hemacandra (Ācārya Hemacandra, 1089–1173) embodied this dialect in the last chapter of his Sanskrit grammar *Siddha-Hema Śabdānuśāsana*. From his time we see the *Apabhraṁśa* trend being gradually softened till, at the beginning of the 15th century, it ceases to be a dialect and becomes the language of the people, particularly in literary works. This evolved language was known as *Gujara Bhākhā* (the language called 'Gujara'), a term used by the poet Bhalana (c. 1500–50). The modern name *Gujarāti* was first mentioned by the famous poet Premanand (c. 1650–1700). The European term *Lingua Guzuratica* was first used in 1731.

According to G. A. Grierson, *Gujarāti* is a member of the central group of Indo-Aryan speeches which possess, morphologically, inflexional as well as non-inflexional forms shared with Western Hindi, Rajasthani and Punjabi.

'Gujarāti' has its own boundaries. In the north it touches the plains of Mt. Abu and the Aravalli range; in the east its border stretches from the Vindhya range in the north to the district of Thane (Maharashtra) in the south; and to the west is the Arabian sea.

Migratory Influences. A lot of Harappan sites have been found in Kacch, a few in Saurashtra and two or three in mainland Gujarat. We do not know who these people were. If we accept Puranic traditions, they might have been Kaulas in Saurashtra and Bhils in the mainland of Gujarat. And in Kutch they might have been Ābhīras who had migrated from ancient Śūrābhīra, or Śūdrābhīra, on the border of western Rajasthan. Not earlier than proto-historical times we find the Śāryātas who lived in northern Saurashtra. Their capital was known as Kuśasthalī and their country as Ānarta, after King Ānarta, son of Śāryāti. After Ānarta his grandson Reva (son of Rocamāna) ruled. During the rule of Reva's son, Revata, the *Rākṣasas* called Puṇyajana attacked Kuśasthalī and destroyed it totally. Nothing further is known about the Śāryātas and the Puṇyajanas.

The next known immigrants were the Yādavas. Around

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1000 B. C., when the Yadava leader Krishna found that his people were not safe in their country around Mathura, in present Uttar Pradesh, he led them and their allies the Ābhīras, to Ānarta (i.e. Saurashtra) and founded a city known as Dvāravatī or Dvārakā near the sea, on the site of the ruins of Kuśasthalī. There is then a dark period for about seven hundred years.

The first known immigrants of the historical period, as far as Gujarat is concerned were the Mauryas (c. 300 B. C.). They were followed by the Yavanas, including Greeks, Bactrians, Parthians and Scythians (300 B. C. to A. D. 100); Hūṇas (200 B. C. to A. D. 500); half-Scythians and Kṣatrapas (100 B. C. to A. D. 300); Guptas (A. D. 320); Gujjaras (A. D. 400 to 600); Traikūṭakas (c. A. D. 450) in south Gujarat (i.e. ancient Lāṭa); Gārulakas (c. A. D. 450) in western Saurashtra; Maitrakas (c. A. D. 500) in south-east Saurashtra; Cāvaṛās (c. A. D. 600); Saindhavas (c. A. D. 700), mainly in west Saurashtra; and Samās (c. A. D. 950). Latecomers were Parsis and Arabs (A. D. 600 to 800); Sanganian Pirates (A. D. 900 to 1200); Muslims (A. D. 1000 to 1500); Audīcya and other Brahmins (A. D. 1000 to 1500); Banias and Rajputs of different clans (A. D. 1000 to this day); Jādejās and Kāṭhīs (A. D. 1200 to 1500); African, Arab, Persian and Makrāṇī soldiers (A. D. 1500 to 1800); Portuguese (A. D. 1500 to 1600); Arabs and Persian Gulf pirates (A. D. 1600 to 1700); Armenian, Dutch and French traders (A. D. 1600 to 1750); and the British (A. D. 1750 onward). All these people have had a part in increasing the vocabulary of Gujarati.

It is worth noting that barring Parsis, Muslims and Europeans, the rest were assimilated in the mainstream of Hinduism and today it is next to impossible to trace their original identities. New immigrants who came from Kacch, however, have preserved their Kacchi dialects intact. In more recent times, immediately after Partition, a number of Hindu Sindhis migrated from Pakistan and have preserved their Sindhi language and modified Arabic script.

Dialects

Owing to the spread of education at all levels, dialectic differences are diminishing gradually. Nevertheless, five dialects are still distinguishable. They are: (i) Surati of lower Bharooch, Surat and Valsad districts; (ii) Charotari of the Kheda district; (iii) Patni of North Gujarat, also including the districts of Banaskantha, Mahesana and Sabarkantha; (iv) Parsi Gujarati, used mainly by the Parsis; and (v) Saurashtri of Saurashtra, with slight variations in different districts within the area. Muslim Vohrās, all over the State, Muslim Ghānchīs of south Saurashtra, the Khārvās and Bhois on the long sea-coast, the Bhil communities of South Gujarat, including the Dāngīs, and the Ābhīras of Kacch-Vāgaṛ have their own dialects.

The general differences among the dialects are to be found in pronunciation, stress and vocables, the morphology remaining the same. For example, though the Dāngī Bhils use comparatively more Marathi words, their morphology is pure Gujarāti. In the opinion of S. M. Katre, even the Konkani of Konkan (Maharashtra) is more akin to Gujarati than Marathi.

Linguistic Affinities. Gujarāti is a full-fledged language, though it is related to several dialects of Rajasthan which did not attain the status of language due to the initial dominance of Persian and later of Hindi in that region. In fact, the phonetic and morphological systems of all the speeches of Rajasthan and of Gujarat are, by and large, the same.

As a means of oral communication, Gujarati is quite a simple language, easily understood by the common man. Even in its literature, the simplicity of the vocabulary is generally maintained. In works of special distinction, the use of simple Sanskrit compounds is common. When dealing with scientific subjects, the technical terms used are generally newly coined ones that have been created with the help of Sanskrit vocables. Familiar English terms are also used.

As a language of today Gujarāti is quite independent, though not less than 50 per cent of its words are from Sanskrit which it has absorbed in the last eight centuries. The rest are mostly inherited through the Prakrit and *Apabhraṁśa* stages. There are also pure *Deśya* words, some received from Arabic and Persian, a few from Portuguese and some even from English, especially if they are in everyday use.

Phonology

Vowels. Although both long and short vowels are used in writing Gujarati, there is no such distinction in pronunciation. Generally all vowels are pronounced short, except 'ā', which is long. Occasionally when a speaker wants to emphasize a sound, even a short vowel is pronounced long.

	Front	*Central*	*Middle*
High	*i*		*u*
Mid	*e*	*ə*	*o*
Low	*E*	*a*	*ɔ*

All these eight vowels have two phases: the unaccented and the accented.

Consonants. There are 36 consonantal sounds in Gujarāti. They are classified thus, according to the types of points of articulation:

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	Stop	*Spirant*	*Nasal*	*Lateral*	*Flap*	*Semi-vowel*
Velar	*k, g*	*kh, gh*	(*ṅ*)			
Palatal	*c, j*	*ch, jh*	(*ñ*)			*y*
Cacuminal	*ṭ, ḍ*	*ṭh, ḍh, (ṣ)*	(*ṇ*)	*ṛ, ṛh, ḷ*		
Dental	*t, d*	*th, dh, s*	*n*			
Labial	*p, b*	*ph, bh*	*m*			
Alveolar				*l*	*r*	*v*
Unmarked		*h*				

Among these consonants, those shown in brackets are used only in Sanskrit and English loans, as in *aṅgə*, *pañcə*, *maṇḍaḷ* (a), *baṅk*, etc. Others are equally shared by the Gujarati tongue. The sounds 'ṛ' and 'ṛh' are rather palatal and are pronounced while either intervocalic or at the end of a word, after a vowelic syllable. The sound 'ḷ' is a cerebral and is commonly shared with Rajasthani, Marathi and all the Dravidian languages. All these three sounds never occur in the beginning of a word. These sounds are as old as Vedic times and are found in such words as *i ṛe*, *dṛṛham*, *iḷ ā*, etc.

Morphology

As a rule Gujarāti grammar, its morphological system, is in accordance with the old Indo-Aryan. Parts of speech are the same and their relationship with one another is of the same pattern. The parts of speech are divided into three groups: (i) nominal (declinable) system, (ii) verbal system, and (iii) indeclinable system.

Nominal System. In this system are found (i) substantives or nouns, (ii) adjectives, and (iii) pronouns.

Substantives. In Gujarāti, the substantives have three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, and two numbers, singular and plural.

Gender. Nouns denoting males are masculine, those of females feminine, and those which are neither masculine nor feminine, i.e. beyond recognition, are neuter.

Though this is the common rule, exceptions are also found, such as *tāy(a)pho* (masc.)—a lady dancer, *bairū* (neu.)—a lady. But such words are very few.

Following the old trend, Gujarāti also has these three genders for lifeless objects. As for example: *ratha* (masc.) a chariot, *pāhṛ(a)* (masc.) a mountain, *gādī* (fem.) a cart, *pṛthvī* (fem.) the earth, *gāṛū* (neu.) a cart, *tāḷāv(ə)* (neu.) a pond. Some nouns also have double genders, such as *cā* (masc. & fem.) tea, *sopārī* (fem. & masc.) betel nut etc.

Nouns are divided into two categories, variable and invariable. Masculine variable nouns end in 'o'; feminine in 'i'; neuter in 'u'. Invariable nouns end in any vowel other than these three.

Variable	*Invariable*
ghoṛo (masc.) (a horse)	*ṭhag(a)* (masc.) (a robber)
ghoṛi (fem.) (a mare)	*vāt(a)* (fem.) (a story)
ghoṛū (neu.) (a horse)	*ghar(a)* (neu.) (a house)

Number. There is no distinctive sign in Gujarāti words to indicate singular number excepting in the case of variable nouns, where the 'o', 'i' and 'ū' endings are themselves singular forms. In the case of invariable nouns, those listed above are all in singular number. To show plural number, 'o' is added as a rule to the stem; thus *ṭhag-o* (masc.) (robbers), *vāt-o* (fem.) (stories), *ghar-o* (neu.) (houses). Some other rules are observed such as, if the number is shown by adjectives, generally no sign is used and so on.

Verbal System. Gujarāti has retained its inherited system of transitive as well as intransitive verbs. It has also inherited only the present and future tenses and the imperative mood. All other tenses and moods have been substituted with the help of participles and auxiliary forms. All the verbs have three persons and two numbers.

It is notable that in the case of transitive verbs, with a few exceptions, the voice is always passive. Such verbs change their genders according to their objects.

Indeclinable System. In this system there are four categories: (i) adverbs, (ii) post-positions, (iii) conjunctions, and (iv) exclamations.

Adverbs. These are mainly divided into derivatives that are pronominal and common.

Post-Positions. In English there are prepositions, because they precede nouns and pronouns. In modern Indo-Aryan speeches prepositions are post-positions because they follow the nouns and pronouns, generally giving meanings of different nominal cases. A very few of these have attained the capacity of case-terminations.

Conjunctions (or Conjunctives). Conjunctions such as these are words used between two words as well as between sentences: *əne-ne-təthā-tEḥm(a)-tEhmaj(a)* (all having a meaning 'and' 'as well as')—*ath(a)vā-vā-ke-yā-əgar(a)-kāto* (all having a meaning 'or'), *paṇ(ə)* (but). Some, such as these, follow words only: *to* (too), *j(ə)* (only), *y(ə)* (even). Some, such as these, come at the beginning of a second sentence: *peraṁtu-kiṁtu* (but), *to-paṇ(ə)-tohe-toy(ə)* (yet), *kEm(ə)ke-kāraṇ(ə) ke-kāke* (because), *māṭe* (for), *tethi* (thence), *eṭ(a)le-eṭale ke* (by that), etc.

Exclamations (or Interjections). These are exclamatory words used at the beginning of sentences to show joy, misery, wonder, fear, hatred, negation, confession, anger, etc.

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Word Formation

In Gujarāti there are thousands of words inherited from Sanskrit. New formations have taken place on the same Sanskrit pattern. Suffixes, which form words, are divided into two classes: (i) primary suffixes; and (ii) secondary suffixes. Primary suffixes form words from verbal roots, while secondary suffixes form words other than from verbal roots.

Syntax. Whether active, passive or impersonal, the order of words in a sentence is as follows: subject, object, verb.

If there are two sentences to be joined by conjunctions indicative of 'when', 'where', 'if', or by pronominal adjectives meaning 'who', 'which', 'that', etc. the principal sentence must always follow the subsidiary one.

In prose writing, the order of the words in a sentence is not generally changed. In prosodical compositions, however, the order is often changed in such a way that it does not harm the meaning of the sentence.

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Hindi

B. N. TIWARI

Hindi, one of the major languages of India, is a member of the Indo-European family of languages. It is spoken mainly in the states of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and the Union Territory of Delhi, and in some parts of the Punjab and the Deccan. It is the language of more than 30% of India's population. Outside India some mixed dialects of Hindi are spoken in Mauritius, Trinidad, Surinam, Fiji, South Africa and the Soviet Union. On the basis of the number of speakers Hindi ranks third among the languages of the world, the first two being Chinese and English respectively.

The Name

The word *hindi* is derived from the Sanskrit word *sindhu* which means 'ocean' or 'river'. The river Indus and the region on its both sides (now the Sindh province of Pakistan) were called *Sindhu* in ancient times. The ancient Iranians used to pronounce it in a corrupt way giving rise to the forms *Hindu*>*Hind*. Its meaning also changed and widened to include the whole of India. The word *Hindi*, an adjective formed from *Hind*, was initially used in the sense of 'an Indian' and 'language of India' and later on in the restricted sense of 'the language of Central India (*Madhyadeśa*) which is its current sense. It may be of interest to note that the old form of *Hindi*, *Hindic* became *Indica* in Greek and *India* in English.

The words *Hindavi*, *Hinduī* and *Hindustānī* also have been used some time or the other to mean more or less the same language as *Hindī*.

Origin and Development

The oldest Indo-Aryan language was Sanskrit (*Saṁskṛta*; 1500–500 B.C.) the spoken form of which was the source language for Pali (*Pālī* 500 B.C. to A.D. 1) from which developed the Prakrits (*Prākṛta;* 1–500) and the Prakrits developed into the Apabhramsas (*Apabhraṁśa*; 500–1000)

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The Apabhramsas comprised a number of regional dialects of which *Śaurasenī*, *Ardhamāgadhī* and *Māgadhī* were the sources for the development of Hindi and its dialects.

Like the other modern Indo-Aryan languages, the Hindi language has a history beginning from about the year A.D. 1000 which may be divided into three periods: the early (1000–1500), the medieval (1500–1800) and the modern (from 1800). In the early period the Hindi language was slowly emerging as a distinct language from the Apabhramsa dialects and still contained their remnants. Like Sanskrit, Pali and the Prakrits, the Apabhramsas were synthetic in nature. This synthetic nature is present in Early Hindi too, but there are evident signs of analyticity in the form of postpositions and auxiliary verbs. In comparison to the Apabhramsas, Early Hindi developed a few phonological innovations which deserve mention. The most important of them were: (1) the reintroduction of the two vowels *ai* and *au* found in Sanskrit but which were lost in Pali, the Prakrits and the Apabhramsas; (2) the use of two new consonants, flapped *ḍ* and *ḍh*, though on the allophonic level; and (3) the development of the earlier consonant clusters *nh*, *mh* and *lh* into aspirate counterparts of *n*, *m* and *l* respectively. The vocabulary consisted mainly of native words and words of the Apabhramsas both in the *tatsama* (equal to that) and the *tadbhava* (born of that) forms. A few hundreds of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Pushto words had crept into active use due to the advent and influence of the Muslims. In the literary language of that period we come across five types of mixed dialects sometimes laden with Apabhramsa forms, viz. Old Brajbhasha, Old Avadhi, Old Maithili, Old Rajasthani and Old Khaḍiboli.

In the medieval period the analytic nature of Hindi became obvious, as the use of postpositions and auxiliary verbs rose to about more than 70 per cent in contradistinction to inflected forms. The syllabic structure of Hindi words seems to have undergone a change of far-reaching consequences in that the word-final and, in certain environments, the word-medial *a* was dropped. The vocabulary also underwent important changes due to the political and social conditions of that period. The Moghal Empire was in its bloom, and the court language was Persian. The result was that about six thousand Arabic and Persian words became part and parcel of the Hindi vocabulary. The *Bhakti* movement, on the other hand, contributed to an increasing use of Sanskrit words, mainly of a religious colour, in their *tatsama* form. As a result of the nascent European contact, more than a hundred Portuguese and a few Spanish, French and English words crept in.

In the early and medieval periods a number of dialects of Hindi, viz. Maithili, Brajbhasha, Avadhi, Rajasthani and Khaḍiboli, were used for literary composition. In the modern period various factors working cumulatively made Khaḍiboli, the dialect of Delhi—the political nerve centre of India—the standard vehicle of literature. Brajbhasha and Avadhi were relegated to the background as the religious forces which brought them to the fore had disappeared by then. With the borrowing of Arabic and Persian words the Hindi sound system was enriched by the addition of *q* (voiceless uvular stop), *x* (voiceless soft-palatal ficative), *g* (voiced soft-palatal fricative), *z* (voiced alveolar fricative) and *f* (voiceless labio-dental fricative). In the same way, lexical borrowing from English gave *ɔ* (rounded half-open back vowel) phonemic status in the speech of the educated elite. As regards vocabulary, Hindi has borrowed from English more than four thousand words which are current in everyday use, and, in order to meet the demands of science, technology, law and administration, has either borrowed from English and Sanskrit or coined from Sanskrit roots more than two hundred thousand technical terms.

Dialects

The geographical features of the present-day Hindi region had caused the growth of a number of dialects in the ages of the Prakrits and the Apabhramsas themselves out of which grew more than a dozen dialects of Hindi, many of which have rich literature to their credit, so much so that Hindi may be called a *sub-family* of languages rather than a more or less homogeneous single language. The main dialects of Hindi, are generally classified into five groups on the basis of their genealogical affinity to the earlier Apabhramsa dialects, as shown in the table below:

Apabhraṁśa source	*Hindi dialect group*	*Hindi dialect*	*Region where spoken*
Śaurasenī	Pahāḍī	Himācalī	Himachal Pradesh
		Kumāyūṁnī	Kumayun (Northern U.P.)
		Gaḍhvālī	Garhwal (Northern U.P.)
	Rājasthānī	Eastern	Rajasthan
		Western	
		Northern	
		Southern	
	Western Hindi	Haryānī	Haryana; Delhi
		Khaḍiboli	(rural) Delhi (urban), some districts of Western U.P.
		Brajbhāṣā	Some districts of Western U.P.
		Bundelī	Bundelkhand (M.P)
		Kanaujī	Kanauj (U.P.)
Ardhamāgadhī	Eastern Hindi	Avadhī	Some districts of Eastern U.P.
		Bagheli	Baghelkhand (M.P.)
		Chattisgaḍhī	Chattisgarh (M.P.)
Māgadhī	Bihārī	Bhojpurī	Some districts of Eastern U.P. and Western Bihar
		Magahī	Central Bihar
		Maithilī	Eastern Bihar

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Of these the Rajasthani group and the Maithili dialect have been approved by the Central Sahitya Akademi as two distinct languages. The standard Hindi approved in the Indian Constitution as the official language of the Union is based on the Khaḍībolī dialect of the Western Hindi group.

The most important of these dialects are Brajbhāṣā, Avadhī, Maithili and Khaḍībolī. Brajbhāṣā is spoken in Mathura, Agra, Aligarh and around in Western U.P. The *vraja* in Sanskrit means 'a herd of cows' or 'a pasture land', and as the said region was known for these, it was named *Braja* and hence the name Brajbhāṣā. Brajbhāṣā has a very rich literary tradition, and even outside the Hindi region, for example, in the Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra, celebrated poets used to write in Brajbhāṣā. Avadhī is spoken in the Faizabad, Lucknow, Allahabad and neighbouring districts of Eastern U.P. This region was called Avadh (<Sanskrit *Ayodhya*) in medieval times and hence the name *Avadhī*. Avadhī again, has a rich literary tradition. Tulasidas composed his classical work *Rāmcaritmānas* in Avadhī. Maithilī is spoken in Eastern Bihar. The old name of this region was Mithila on the basis of which the dialect is named Maithili. The famous poet Vidyapati wrote his *Padāvalī* in Maithili.

Khaḍībolī is spoken in the Ghaziabad, Meerut, Rampur, Moradabad and Bijnaur districts of Western U.P. and in Delhi city. The etymology of the name *Khaḍībolī* is uncertain. According to some people *khaḍī* is in fact *kharī* which means 'pure'. In the beginning of the 19th century writers in the dialect were very careful not to use any non-native word and so the language was called *Kharibolī*. The modern standard Hindi is mainly based on this dialect. A 'variety' of Khaḍībolī known as *Dakkhinī* is spoken in the Deccan. The original speakers of this 'variety' came to the Deccan from the North in the 14th century as a consequence of Mohammed Tuglaq's attempt to shift the capital of his empire to Chandragiri. Dakkhini had got the patronage of the Bahmani Kingdom and its successors and developed a rich literature. This 'variety' was referred to as *Hindī* by Miranji Shamsul Usshaq (d. 1497) and as *Dakkhinī*, probably for the first time, by Vajahi (died between 1639–60). Apart from the riddles of Amir Khusrau (1253–1325) in the Northern Khaḍībolī preserved in oral tradition, all the important early works in Khaḍībolī are in Dakkhini.

The 'variety' of Hindi spoken in the Soviet Union belongs to the Western Hindi group of dialects and the others spoken outside India to the Bihari, especially to Bhojpuri.

Variations of the Name

The term Hindi is generally used in four distinct senses: (i) a cover term for the entire dialects spoken in the region specified above; (ii) a cover term for those dialects grouped as Eastern and Western Hindi; (iii) standard Khaḍībolī; and (iv) a functional variant of standard Khaḍībolī. Standard Khaḍībolī has three functional variants which differ from one another mainly in vocabulary but have the same basic grammar. One of these variants is called 'Hindi' and the others are Hindustani and Urdu. Hindustani abounds in native words, viz. *deśī* and *tadbhava*, and has some simple Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian words. The variant 'Hindi' has the whole corpus of Hindustani plus a large number of Sanskrit words. Urdu, on the other hand, has in addition to the whole corpus of Hindustani, thousands of Arabic and Persian words. One who speaks Hindustani on informal occasions switches over to either Hindi or Urdu on formal occasions and in writing. Thus from the linguistic point of view Urdu is only a functional variant of Hindi in the sense of standard Khaḍībolī. It is on non-linguistic grounds that Urdu has been accorded the status of a distinct language.

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Kannada

M. CHIDANANDA MURTHY

Kannada–Karnataka

Kannada (*Kannaḍa*) is one of the Dravidian languages spoken in South India. It is the language of the majority of people living in the state of Karnataka and of a considerable number of people living in the neighbouring states of Kerala, Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. The speakers of the language in India number about 21.7 million, out of whom 86 per cent live in Karnataka. The language is surrounded on three sides by three major Dravidian languages (Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu) on the southern and eastern borders, while it is bounded by Marathi, an Indo-Aryan language, on the northern side. On the western side lies Tulu, an uncultivated Dravidian language. Consequently, while the language has come under the deep influence of Aryan elements, it has, at the same time, retained its 'Dravidianness' in terms of vocabulary, literary genres, etc.

The names Kannada and Karnataka are sometimes taken as interchangeable terms, both being used to signify the language as well as the country (*Kannaḍa-nāḍu,/Karnāṭa-dēśa* 'the Karnataka country'; *Kannaḍa-nuḍi/Karnāṭa-bhāṣe* 'the Kannada language'). This is not illogical. Yet, officially and in actual usage, Kannada and Karnataka represent the language and the state respectively.

Historical Background

The terms Kannada and Karnataka have a history stretching to distant periods. The name Karnataka is used for the first time, in the sense of a region or a country in the Mahabharata (4th–3rd century B.C.). The name has a variant reading in *unnatyaka* (high land?). One of the earliest references to Karnataka in epigraphical literature is to be found in the Bedapur copper-plates of the Western Ganga King Bhuvikrama (7th century).

The Derivation. The derivation of the terms 'Karnataka' and 'Kannada' is a matter of great dispute among scholars. Most scholars are of the opinion that 'Karnata(ka)' is the Sanskritic rendering of the native form 'Kannada' or its equivalent. The word 'Karnata(ka)' is variously explained as 'Kar+nāṭ+ak(g)am' (land of the black soil) or 'Karu+nāṭ' (elevated land).

Among Dravidian languages, Kannada belongs to what is popularly known as the South Dravidian sub-grouping. There is the tendency of the initial *c-/s-* to become zero in South Dravidian languages, and this is shared by Kannada along with the other languages like Tamil and Malayalam. The language has undergone many changes over the centuries; but, at the same time it has retained many features which go back to the Proto-Dravidian, the hypothetical parental language of all Dravidian languages. Many of these features have been lost in other languages. Palatalization is an example. Among literary languages, Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu show palatalization (i.e. the sound 'k' becoming 'c') under fixed phonological conditions, whereas Kannada has retained the initial K- and hence is invaluable in the reconstruction of *K-. At the same time, the language exhibits certain changes in time peculiar to itself as for example, 'p'>'h'. This change is one of the major factors which helped Old Kannada evolve into Middle and Modern Kannada.

Old Kannada

When exactly the language branched off from the parental language and started a life of its own cannot be determined easily. Kannada probably branched off as a separate language in the 4th century B.C., or even earlier. As regards the antiquity of Kannada language we are on more solid ground. The earliest 'datable Kannada word', according to D. L. Narasimhachar, is 'Isila' a place-name found in the Brahmagiri inscription (3rd century B.C.) of Asoka. The word is certainly Kannada and it is derived from 'ey' or 'esu' which means to shoot an arrow. Isila must have been a township with a 'shooting place' or a fort. Govinda Pai has identified some words as Kannada words in Hala's *Gāthāsaptaśati* (1st century A.D.), as for example 'atta' (cf. *atte*=mother-in-law), 'poṭṭa' (cf. *poṭṭe*=belly), 'tuppa' (cf. *tuppa*=clarified butter, ghee). These are all stray individual specimens, no doubt Kannada; but the first running text in authentic Kannada is found in the Halmidi inscription (c. 450). The text records a gift to two war-heroes Pashupati and Naga who in turn make over a part of their gifts to certain Brahmins. The language is primitive old Kannada ('pūrvada haḷagannaḍa'), but what strikes any reader is the sustained influence of Sanskrit on Kannada in terms of morphology and even of syntax. The hybrid verbal compound 'Pettajayan' (a man who has gained victory) has 'petta' a Kannada verbal form, and 'jaya' a borrowing from Sanskrit. Besides, a passive construction, alien to Dravidian syntax, is also an evidence of the deep impact which Sanskrit had on the language even before it was reduced to writing.

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The importance of the Halmidi inscription as the earliest Kannada record cannot be overestimated. It is a record put up by the Kadambas whom historians consider as the first Kannada kings to rule Karnataka. There is no doubt whatsoever, that they fervently favoured Kannada as the language of administration (before the Kadambas it was Prakrit, an inheritance from the Mauryas). Beginning from the 5th century, there is a continuous stream of Kannada inscriptions announcing gifts of land and other legal transactions. As the language gained importance in administrative circles, it went on gaining in powers of expression. It was probably during the time of the Chalukyas of Badami, that Kannada was employed for the first time for aesthetic pursuits. Historians are almost unanimous that it was during the Chalukyan Age that what has come to be recognized as 'Karnataka Culture' shaped itself and the 7th century is justly regarded as the formative period of Karnataka culture. The first Kannada literary works must have been composed under the patronage of the Chalukyan kings. The earlier Kannada inscriptions of considerable literary value began to appear from the end of the 7th century, and this is one strong evidence of the growth of literary activities, because, in Karnataka at least, the language of inscriptions has invariably been modelled upon the language of literary works. The dialect spoken in and around the capital of Badami became the standard language or the court language, and it was this dialect which was favoured by poets for literary compositions even long after the Chalukyan empire ceased to exist. Srivijaya's *Kavirājamārga* (c. 850), a work on poetics, clearly says that the 'essence of Kannada language' lies in the area surrounding Badami, Pattadakal, etc.

Kavirājamārga is the earliest available work in Kannada and is composed in what is now known as 'Haḷagannaḍa' or Old Kannada. The inscriptional language from c. 450 to c. 800 is 'Pūrvada-Haḷagannaḍa' or Primitive Old Kannada. Old Kannada is a development of this Primitive Old Kannada. Some of these forms are nearer to those of Old Tamil. Many phonological and morphological features demarcate Primitive Old Kannada from Old Kannada. To give one instance, the voiced retroflex fricative 'ḷ, a characteristic phoneme of the Dravidian family, is regularly maintained in Primitive Old Kannada, whereas it begins to split and merge into 'ḷ' and 'r' in Old Kannada. It was during the 9th and 10th centuries that a large number of Prakrit and Sanskrit words were adopted by Kannada.

The Middle Kannada

By the end of the 9th century or from the beginning of the 10th century, the transition from Old Kannada into Middle Kannada had begun, and by 11th century the process was almost complete. The two main phonological changes which took place are: (1) 'p' became 'h' and (2) all consonantal ending words (and even suffixes) became vowel-ending. (e.g. *pal*>*hallu*, 'tooth'; *pāl*>*hālu* 'milk').

Middle Kannada is a stage of transition from Old Kannada to Modern Kannada. A modern literate person can easily read and appreciate the literature composed during the Middle Kannada period (12th–19th century), whereas he needs to be specially equipped to follow Old Kannada (9th–10th century).

Modern Kannada

Modern Kannada had its beginnings in the early decades of the 19th century when the speakers of the language came into contact with English, and through it with modern civilization. There are now four major dialectal areas and each area again has sub-dialectal areas. The major dialects are Coastal or Mangalore Kannada which is deeply influenced by Tulu and to a little extent by Malayalam; Bangalore or Southern Kannada, perhaps the most important dialect (because it is the dialect spoken in the capital and freely used in newspapers, radio-broadcasts, and films), the Dharwad or Northern dialect with a heavy mixture of Marathi and Gulbarga or the North-Eastern dialect with an equally heavy mixture of Urdu. This is no doubt a highly simplified picture of the dialectal situation. For normal literary purposes, it is the Bangalore dialect that is preferred and this dialect has a larger number of English borrowings than any other dialect. In poetry and in conversational writings, writers of each area prefer their own dialect, and since all the dialects are fairly mutually intelligible, the writers can communicate with all readers even while expressing themselves in their own dialect. The Bangalore dialect wields a tremendous influence over other dialects, and the dialectal differences are being levelled down slowly. This tendency is gradually leading towards the emergence of a common standard language.

The Script

The Kannada script differs very little from the Telugu script, and it may be said that they were almost the same till the end of the Vijayanagara period (16th century). The script evolved from the southern variety of Asokan Brahmi (3rd century B.C.). During the succeeding periods, the Brahmi characters which were mainly linear became rounded or curved, may be because of the 'Tāla' leaves used as writing material. The present-day script was stabilized during the Chalukyas of Kalyani and the Hoysalas (11th–12th century), and from that time onwards the script has undergone minor changes, although the printing machine was responsible for certain changes during the 19th century.

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Phonology

The traditional modern Kannada alphabet consists of fifty letters ('akṣaras') which are categorized under two headings: vowels (16) and consonants (34). The latter are again sub-categorized into 'classified' (25) and 'unclassified' consonants (9). The vowels include ten main ones (*a*, *ā*; *i*, *ī*; *u*, *ū*; *e*, *ē*; *o*, *ō*), two diphthongs (*ai*, *au*), two semi-vowels (*r̥*, *r̥̄*). The remaining two symbols are not really vowels but consonants: the 'bindu' in the shape of zero is used in place of nasal phonemes when they precede homo-organic consonants and the 'visarga', which is a glottal fricative used before (*k*) or (*kh*).

The classified consonants contain twenty stops and five homo-organic nasals and all of them are neatly arranged under five groups; the velar-series, the palatal-series, the retroflex-series, the dental-series and the bilabial-series. The remaining consonants are 'unclassified' because they include various consonants which do not fall precisely under any single group. They are *y*, *r*, *l*, *v*, *ś*, *ṣ*, *s*, *h*, *ḷ*.

It is generally believed that proto-Dravidian had voiced and unvoiced stops as allophones, which are still retained to some extent in Tamil. Dravidian had no aspirates originally. Owing to historical reasons, Kannada has even from its historical period, maintained distinction between voiced and unvoiced stops, and also between unaspirates and aspirates. In modern Kannada the ability to express this distinction between aspirates and unaspirates is a social marker (e.g. *dana* 'cattle, *dhana* 'wealth'). Because of the impact of English, modern Kannada has developed a phoneme (f), found in coffee, fine etc. and this borrowed phoneme is already replacing the earlier (ph) in many places (*Kapha* > *Kafa* = 'Phlegm'; *Phala* > *fala* = 'Fruit'). The distinction between the palatal (ś), retroflex (ṣ) and dental (s) fricatives is maintained in the standard dialect and this ability to maintain the distinction is also a social marker.

The number of signs in the Kannada alphabet is sufficient to write standard Kannada and the system is phonetic in the sense each sign represents a definite sound. There can be no mistake in reading a written word or sentence; in other words Kannada has no spelling problems like English. That does not mean the writing system is ideally phonetic, for we still find occasionally one symbol being used to represent two distinct phonemes like the neutral vowel, and the back unrounded half-open vowel (e.g. both *tənde* 'father' and *tʌnde* 'I brought' are written as *tande* in Kannada).

Grammar

In Kannada, the gender and number are denoted by the same marker. The gender distinction is based on whether a thing belongs to the 'rational' or 'irrational' group. Only the rational has masculine and feminine distinction in singular, but in plural the distinction is unmarked. The irrational is invariably neuter, which results in confusion sometimes in the case of Sanskrit borrowings. The word for 'sun' in Sanskrit is *sūrya* which is masculine, but when it is borrowed into Kannada and used as a subject the word could be either in masculine or neuter (neuter because the native word for 'sun' in Kannada i.e. *hottu* is irrational or neuter).

Kannada has no nominative case; the nominal base with its gender/number marker itself is used in the nominative. The language has clear markers for accusative, dative, ablative, genitive, locative and sociative cases and the instrumental is expressed through the ablative. The case-markers are the same irrespective of gender and number and they are added to the nominal forms after gender/number markers. All cases are expressed through post-positions, and we have reasons to believe that the post-positions which are mostly bound forms now, were free forms earlier.

The verb agrees with the subject in gender and number and contains the verbal base + the tense maker + gender/number marker. There are only two tenses, the past and the non-past, and the same form denotes both the present and the future. Since all syntactic relationships are expressed through suffixes, unlike English, Kannada has no word-order proper. A sentence like 'Rama kills Ravana' could be written in any order, Ravana kills Rama/Kills Rama Ravana, etc. without any change in meaning. The usual sentence pattern would be subject + object + verb and in speech the place of subject and object are inter-changeable.

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Vocabulary

The lexicon of the language is basically Dravidian; at the same time the language has borrowed heavily from Indo-Aryan, especially Sanskrit. One cannot construct a non-simple sentence in Kannada without the aid of Sanskrit borrowings. The earlier grammarians have given sanctions that any Sanskrit word could be borrowed by Kannada with or without change, provided the genius of the language accommodates the modification. Whenever there was a clamour for an excessive use of Sanskrit words, there was also a word of warning from wise people that too much dependence on Sanskrit kills the spirit of the borrowing language. In modern times, the language has come under the deep influence of English and this has resulted in 'modernizing' the language. For technical or scientific purposes, either the English terms are borrowed and adapted or translated. In such transactions, Sanskrit words get preference over native words.

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Kashmiri

OMKAR N. KOUL

The Kashmiri language is called Kāśur or Kāśir zabān by its native speakers. It is called Kaśmīrī in Hindi-Urdu. As per the census figures of 1971 there are 24,38,360 native speakers of the language which is primarily spoken in the Kashmir valley of the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

Origin

There is no uniformity of opinion regarding the origin or genealogical classification of Kashmiri. There are two main views: one places Kashmiri under the Dardic group of languages, and the other placing it under the Indo-Aryan group of languages. Kashmiri does have some peculiar Dardic characteristics while it shares a number of other features with other Indo-Aryan languages (i.e. Hindi, Punjabi, etc.). According to the first view mainly supported by G. A. Grierson ('Linguistic Classification of Kashmiri', *Indian Antiquary*, XLIV, 1915), Kashmiri belongs to the Dardic group of languages which belong to the Indo-Iranian sub-family of the Indo-European family. The exact relation of Dardic group with the Indo-Aryan languages has not been determined beyond doubt. The Dardic family comprises three language groups—Kāfir group, Khōwār group and Dard group. Kashmiri is placed under the Dard group of languages. According to the second view, Kashmiri has developed like other Indo-Aryan languages out of the Indo-European family of languages and is considered a branch of Indo-Aryan like Hindi, Punjabi, etc. The chief spokesman of this view is Suniti Kumar Chatterji (*Languages and Literatures of Modern India*, 1963, p. 256).

Dialects

There has been no serious linguistically oriented dialect research on Kashmiri so far. Kashṭawārī is the principal area-defined dialect of Kashmiri, other dialects mentioned in the current literature and census reports are Pōgulī, Bunjawālī, Sirājī, Rāmbanī, etc. No worthwhile socio-linguistic research work has so far been conducted to study the different speech variations of different communities and of the people of different professions and occupations. In his *Standard Manual of the Kaṣhmiri Language* (1911) Grierson and later Kachru in his *A Reference Grammar of Kashmiri* (1969) have listed certain linguistic characteristics of Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri. Kachru prefers to use the terms Sanskritized and Persianized dialects for the varieties of Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri respectively. The so-called varieties, however, are not exclusively Hindu and Muslim, but are relevant to class or sub-culture registers.

The Kashmiri speaking area in the Valley of Kashmir is divided into three regions: marāz (southern and south-eastern region), kamrāz (northern and north-western region) and Srinagar and its neighbouring areas. There are some regional variations in Kashmiri spoken in these areas. The Kashmiri language spoken in Srinagar and surrounding areas continues to hold the prestige of being the standard variety which is widely used in literature and in mass media.

Kashmiri is neither the official language nor the medium of instruction in its home State. Therefore its administrative

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and educational roles are restricted. Though Kashmiri maintains a long tradition in poetical compositions, its use in prose has developed only recently, especially after 1947. In the process of its standardization, Kashmiri is fast developing various literary styles and registers.

Writing System

Various writing systems have been used for Kashmiri. The main scripts are: Śārada, Devanagri, Roman and Perso-Arabic. The Śārada script developed around the 10th century is the oldest script used for Kashmiri. It is now being used for very restricted purposes (for writing horoscopes, etc.) by the priestly class of the Kashmiri Pandit community. The Devanagri script with additional diacritical marks has also been used and is still being used by some writers. The Roman script has also been used for Kashmiri but could not become popular. The Perso-Arabic script with additional diacritical marks has been recognized as the official script for Kashmiri by the Jammu & Kashmir Government and is now being widely used. Most of the books are being printed in this script.

Phonology

Kashmiri has the following vowel and consonant phonemes:

(i) *Vowels*

(a) Front unrounded: high /ī/ lower-high /i/ mid /e/ and /ē/ (b) Central unrounded: high /ɨ̄/ and /ɨ/, mid /ə/ and /ə̄/ low /a/ and /ā/; and (c) Back rounded: /ū/ and /u/, mid /o/ and /ō/ and low /ɔ/. The four central vowels /ɨ̄/, /ɨ/ /ə/ and /ə̄/ are difficult to represent correctly because the approved diacritical marks are not found in other Indian languages. All the vowels can be nasalized and the nasalization is phonemic in Kashmiri.

(i) *Consonants*

(a) Stops: bilabial /p/, /ph/ and /b/; dental /t/, /th/ and /d/, retroflex /ṭ/, /ṭh/ and /ḍ/ and velar /k/ /kh/ and /g/ (b) Africates: dental /ts/ and /tsh/ palatoalveolar /c/, /ch/ and /j/; (c) Nasals: bilabial /m/ and alveloar /n/ (d) Fricatives: dental /s/ and /z/ palatal /ś/ glottal /h/; (e) Lateral: alveolar /l/ (f) Trill: alveolar /r/ and (g) Semi-vowels: bilabial /v/ and palatal /y/.

All the consonants except /c/, /ch/ and /j/ can be palatalized in Kashmiri and palatalization is phonemic. There is contrast between non-palatalized and palatalized consonants in the language. Geminated consonants do not occur in Kashmiri. There is no word accent or tone in Kashmiri. There are word final, sentence medial and sentence final junctures and sentence accents.

Vocabulary

Kashmiri shares a bulk of vocabulary items with other Dardic languages. It has also borrowed with adaptation a large number of vocabulary items from Sanskrit, Persian and more recently from English. There are regular rules for adaptation of borrowed lexical items in Kashmiri. For instance, Kashmiri does not have voiced aspirate consonants /bh, dh, ḍh, gh, jh/ and fricatives /x, G/ and uvular stop /q/. These sounds in borrowed lexical items are replaced by /b, d, ḍ, g, j, kh, g and k/ respectively (e.g. lābh > lāb 'profit', dhan > dan 'wealth', ḍhōl > ḍōəl 'drum' ghar > gar 'home', jhanḍā > janḍi 'flag' xās > khās 'special', ghərīb > gərīb 'poor' qalam > kalam 'pen'). /t/ is lost in the final position if it is preceded by /s/ or /ś/. (e.g. darxast > darkhas 'application', abgōśt > abgōś' 'a mutton preparation').

Kashmiri has largely developed its registers of religion, business and law from the lexical items borrowed from Persian (also Arabic). It is mostly on the basis of the choice of the use of certain borrowed lexical items that the speech of Hindus and Muslims is sometimes distinguished. Muslims tend to make use of the borrowed Persian lexical items and Hindus prefer to use borrowed Sanskrit lexical items, e.g.

Muslim	*Hindu*	
āb	pōəny	'water'
khɔdā	bagvān	'God'
ruh	prān	'soul'
akhtāb	siriyi	'sun'
khāb	sopun	'dream'

The borrowed lexical items are adapted according to the phonological system of Kashmiri.

Morphology and Syntax

A few main characteristics of the Kashmiri morphology and syntax will be indicated here.

Nominals. Nominals include nouns, pronouns, adjectives and pro-adjectives. Nouns are declined for number, gender and case. There are two numbers: singular and plural. All nouns are either masculine or feminine. All animate objects follow the natural gender—males are masculine and females feminine. There are no hard and fast rules for assigning a particular gender to the inanimate objects. The gender distinction of the inanimate objects can be learnt only by practice. There are four cases, a direct or nominative case and three oblique cases—a dative, an agentive and an ablative. Different case markers are added to the nouns in oblique cases. Various postpositions also govern the three different oblique cases.

A noun phrase may consist of three constituents—determiner, noun and number. Modifiers of nouns are derived from underlying sentences and therefore a sentence

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may also be an optional constituent of the noun phrase. The co-occurrence restrictions of nouns with number and that of nouns with verbs form an important part of the study of Kashmiri.

Pronouns are also declined for person, number, gender and case. There are separate first and second person personal pronouns which are declined for number, person and case. Demonstrative pronouns are used for the third person personal pronouns as well.

There is a three-term distinction in the demonstrative pronouns: (i) proximate, (ii) remote (within sight) and (iii) remote (out of sight), i.e. yi 'this', hu 'that' (within sight), su 'that' (out of sight). The demonstrative, relative, interrogative and indefinite pronouns also have three sets of forms referring to (a) masculine animate beings, (b) feminine animate beings and (c) inanimate things.

Pronominal suffixes are very frequently suffixes to finite verbal forms to indicate personal pronouns. The usage of pronominal suffixes is optional in the case of first and third person but their use is obligatory in the second person. The pronominal suffixes agree with the pronouns in person, number and case.

There are two sets of adjectives: (i) adjectives which are declined for number, gender and case (e.g. kruhun 'black', nyu:l 'blue', boḍ 'big', etc.) and (ii) indeclinable adjectives (e.g. saphēd 'white', jān 'good', etc). Adjectives which are declinable agree with their nouns in number, gender and case. All genitives in Kashmiri are declinable adjectives. Pro-adjectives are also declined for number, gender and case as other declinable adjectives.

Adjectives are main constituents of adjective phrases. It is important to make a distinction between the base adjectives and derived adjectives. Base adjectives are not derived from any other grammatical category, and therefore do not contain any derivational suffixes (e.g. kūr cha thəz 'the girl is tall', śur chu vyoṭh 'the child is fat'). The derived adjectives on the other hand are derivationally related to some other grammatical category such as noun or verb.

Verbs. Verbs are inflected for person, number, gender and tense in Kashmiri. All verbs are conjugated and can be classified in different sets according to the sentence patterns. All but seven verb stems end in consonant. The infinitive or verbal noun is formed by adding *un* to the verb stem. In the conjugation of the past tense, three distinctions are made: (i) simple past, (ii) indefinite past and (iii) remote past. Different past participles are used to form the three types of past tenses. Different types of verbal structures are formed with or without the help of the auxiliary verb. The verb root, the present participle and the past and perfect participles are used in the formation of other parts of the verb. Some verbs form their past participles in irregular manner (e.g. marun, 'to die', dyun 'to give', dazun 'to burn', etc.) (The apparent irregularity, however is a regular transformation of the Sanskritic models—Ed.)

Conjunct and compound verbs are very common in Kashmiri. Conjunct verb is formed by combining a nominal and verb (e.g. śrān karun 'to take a bath', hisāb dyun 'to account for'. The compound verb is a combination of two verbs, in which one is the main verb and the other an operator.

The main verb is an obligatory element of a verb phrase. Main verbs in Kashmiri are classified under copulative, intransitive, transitive and causative verbs. The copula verb in Kashmiri takes nominal, adjectival and adverbial compliments. Intransitive verbs (which do not take a noun phrase as compliment) are classified under three categories on the basis of the case markers the subject may take. The transitive verbs take a noun phrase as a compliment. A double transitive verb takes two objects. Verbs are causativized by adding causative suffixes to the verb stem. Verb phrase compliments may also include embedded sentences such as (i) noun clause sentences, (ii) question word sentences and (iii) tenseless sentences.

Particles. Particles in Kashmiri are neither declinable nor conjugable. Particles are classified as postpositions and various sub-classes.

Word Order. Kashmiri has a different word order from Hindi-Urdu. In Kashmiri, the verb always comes in the second position in a sentence, and the object, if any, comes at the end (e.g. yi chu kalam, 'This is a pen'; myōn dōs yiyi az, 'My friend will come today').

In a subordinate sentence, the word order is different at the surface level (e.g. myōn dōs, yus dili chu rōzān, yiyi az, 'My friend, who lives in Delhi, will come today'). The underlying word order of Kashmiri is Subject-Verb-Object.

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Malayalam

V. R. PRABODHACHANDRAN NAYAR

Malayalam (*malayāḷam*) is the principal language in Kerala State, and also in the Lakshadweep Islands. As regards the number of speakers it ranks eighth among the languages of India. The census of India, 1971, which records the population of India as 5473.48 lakhs, reveals that 219 lakhs of people speak Malayalam. 205 lakhs of this population lives in Kerala; the rest have moved out to other parts of India as well as to foreign countries, particularly in search of job opportunities. Malayalam is the mother tongue of more than 96 per cent of the population of Kerala, which was 213.47 lakhs as per the 1971 census. The speakers of the Malayalam language, known as Malayalis (plural of *Malayāḷi*) constitute 4 per cent of the population of India.

The Term 'Malayalam'

Originally the term 'Malayalam' appears to have been the name of the land. The initial element *mala* in the word means 'mountain' or 'hill', while the final element *-āḷam* may be an alternant form of *āḻam* meaning 'depth' and referring to 'sea'. *Malayalam* may therefore mean the land which lies in between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea. Another possibility is that *-āḷam* means 'place' or it can be derived from *-aḷam* which also means 'place (a common generic of placenames like pantaḷam). In this case *Malayalam* means 'a land abounding in hills', thereby being synonymous with Malanadu (*malanādu*) and Malabar (*malabāṟ*). The name of the language under discussion has had various other forms also, such as Keralabhasha (*Kēraḷabhāṣa*), Malayampazha (*malayāmpāḻa*), Malayalim (*malayāḷim*), Malayayma (*malayāyma*), Malayanma (*malayāṇma*) and Malayazhma (*malayāḻma*). Of these *Keralabhasha* is the term used in *Līlātilakam*, the 14th-century treatise on poetics; *Malayampazha* (the Malayalam language) is attested in *Hortus Malabaricus*, a botanical work in Latin, published by the Dutch during 1678–1703 from Amsterdam. *Malayalim* has been used by foreigners including Peet (d. 1865) who published a *Grammar of Malayalim Language* in 1841; the form *Malayāṇma* (customs in Kerala) is found in written records up to 1891. The title of the grammar written by George Mathen (1819–70) is *Malayāḻmayuṭe vyākaraṇam* (Grammar of Malayalam, 1863). It may also be noted that till very recently Malayalam versions or annotations of Sanskrit works were referred to as Tamizh kuthu (*tamiḻkkuttu*, meaning 'Tamil book'; e.g. *amaram tamiḻkkuttu*—Annotation in Malayalam, of the Sanskrit lexicon called *Amarakōśa*). Rama Panicker (rāmappaṇikkar) of the Niranam (niraṇam) school of poets (15th century) states that he intends to start narration of *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇam* in Tamil (tamiḻ) and not in *bhāṣāmiśṛam* (language mixture).

Emergence of the Language

Many grammarians, historians of Malayalam literature and other scholars have expressed their views on the origin of the Malayalam language. Most of the hypotheses that have been formulated in this connection deserve a place only in the history of ideas about the origin and development of the language. The most orthodox among such views is that Malayalam originated from Sanskrit. Another view was that the source of Malayalam was one of the early Prakrits. There was also a view that Malayalam was a mixture of an independent language spoken by the aboriginal tribes of Kerala and the Dravidian languages. There is even a view that the Malayalam language is a product of the union of Sanskrit and Tamil. The striking similarity between Tamil and Malayalam in many respects as also their indisputable individuality has long been a fascinating topic of discussion for scholars. Some held that Malayalam is a daughter of the Tamil language, while the others considered

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that it is a daughter of the primitive Dravidian language and sister of the Tamil language.

Exposure of scholars in later years to current procedure in the field of historical and comparative linguistics has resulted in their taking a fresh look at the problem. Now we have little or no doubt in assigning Malayalam to the southern group of Dravidian languages along with Tamil, Kota, Toda, Kodagu and Kannada. Malayalam has the maximum degree of affinity to Tamil. This is obviously due to both Malayalam and Tamil having had a common stock which may be designated as Proto-Tamil-Malayalam. The earliest traces in written records, of the emergence of Malayalam as a distinct language are detected in inscriptions of the 9th century. Disintegration of Proto-Tamil-Malayalam, the common stock of both Malayalam and Tamil, resulting in the separation of Malayalam and Tamil, as evident in written records, appears to have been spread over a period of four or five centuries (9th–13th century). The reconstruction of the spoken form (the Kerala region) of this period is still a desideratum. Among the four major Dravidian languages which have a literary tradition of several centuries, Malayalam seems to have been the last to establish its individuality through literary works of its own. As is well known, Tamil has the earliest literary tradition. So it was but natural for the elite in Kerala to participate in that tradition, rich and ancient.

The early centuries of evolution of Malayalam are characterized by the predominance of Tamil influence. Although Malayalam was the language of the masses, Tamil had acquired the status of the language of scholarship even in the West Coast. In due course, however, the colloquial language of Kerala rose in status and could penetrate into the highly stylized and rigid language employed even in the imperial documents.

One of the obvious effects of the Brahmins' cultural conquest of South India in general and of Kerala in particular was the irresistible influence of Sanskrit and Prakrits on the regional language. The influence of the Brahmins and their language on the life and language of the people of Kerala was considerable. Marks of Aryan influence on the Malayalam language are clearly observable at all levels of the language, such as Phonology, Morphology, *Sandhi*, Syntax and Semantics. As regards the final disintegration of Proto-Tamil-Malayalam this external influence did have a catalytic effect.

Structural Features

Phonetically and phonologically the most notable among the salient features of Malayalam are the following: (i) The presence of what is usually described as an enunciative vowel generally occurring in the word final position, so as to avoid final occurrence of most consonants, as in the Malayalis' pronunciation of English loan words such as 'bus', 'road', 'book', etc. (ii) The absence of any substantial difference in pronouncing the two series of aspirated plosives, such as those appearing in *nakham* (nail) and *mēgham* (cloud). (iii) The common occurrence of a typical retroflex continuant ḷ as in *maḷa* (rain), *puḷa* (river), *vaḷi* (way), etc. (iv) The clear distinction between the flapped consonants r and ṛ, as in *kari* (charcoal) and kaṛi (curry) and also between the two laterals l and ḷ, as in the name of the language itself, in which the first lateral is apical and the second retroflex.

Morphologically Malayalam is agglutinative in the sense that the morphemic boundaries are in most cases quite clear. See for example, *miṭukk-an-mār-uṭe* which is analyzable as 'smartness–masculine–plural–genitive', thereby meaning 'of the smart men'. All native affixes in the language are suffixes. The case markers in Malayalam are word-closing suffixes. The finite verbal forms in the present-day Malayalam do not have any markers for person, number and gender of the subject.

The order of constituents of typical Malayalam sentences is subject–object–verb, as in *gōpi raviye kaṇṭu* (Gopi Ravi—objective case—saw: Gopi saw Ravi). Thus, in general, Malayalam sentences end in a verb. Complementation involves in most cases the use of either *āṇə* (highback unrounded vowel) or *ākunnu*, both of which can be analyzed as present tense forms of the Malayalam verb meaning 'to be'. Thus for example, *atə pūcca āṇə* 'that—cat—is': 'That is (a) cat'; and *daivam satyam ākunnu* 'god—truth—is': ' God is truth'. Typically there is no agreement between the qualifier and the qualified in regard to number or gender or case.

The Script

Barring a few letters representing non-initial consonants, the Malayalam script is syllabic in nature since, as regards the majority of instances, each letter represents either a word initial vowel or a consonant with an inherent *a*. Historically the present-day Malayalam script can be traced to one specific style of writing known as *vaṭṭeḷuttə* (round writing), current in the West Coast till the end of the 18th century. *Vaṭṭeḷuttu* in its turn is derivable from the Brahmi (*brāhmi*) script prevalent all over India during the period of Asoka. Most of the early records in Malayalam are in *Vaṭṭeḷuttu*, which when handling unassimilated Sanskrit loan words let in some special symbols called *grandhākṣaraṅṅaḷ* (book letters) also derived, ultimately, from Brahmi. The Malayalam script, however, seems to have been systematized to a considerable extent, as early as the first half of the 13th century.

Language Variations and External Influences. There are different types of language variation noticed within the overall picture of the present-day Malayalam. Malayalam

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appears to be the sum total of many regional, communal, occupational and social dialects and also of various styles and registers. The shaping up of a standard variety is being considerably helped by the press, the radio and the spread of education using mass produced textbooks. In addition to geographical and socio-cultural factors, caste and religion also seem to be one of the parameters of language variation seen in Kerala. Thus the salient features of the dialects of Harijans, Brahmins, Nairs, Ezhavas, Christians and Muslims have been identified. In general, the Brahmin dialect reveals the highest degree of Sanskrit influence, whereas the Harijan dialect the lowest. The predominance of loan words from English, Syriac, Latin and Portuguese characterizes the Christian dialect, while the Muslim dialect is influenced to a great extent by Arabic and Urdu.

During its evolution through centuries Malayalam came into contact, in varying degrees, with many other languages such as Sanskrit, Prakrits, Pali, Marathi, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Persian, Syriac, Portuguese, Dutch, French and English. As a result of this a number of foreign elements have gained currency in Malayalam. The greatest interference detectable as regards the structure of Malayalam is undoubtedly that of Sanskrit. As the Malayalam alphabet is comprehensive enough to represent all the phonemes in Sanskrit, almost any lexical item could be absorbed into Malayalam even in the *tatsama* (meaning 'identical with the original') form, that is, without any significant alteration in phonological shape. Not only nominal and indeclinable forms from Sanskrit, but also verbal roots from that language have been profusely borrowed into Malayalam. An examination of all verbal forms commonly used in colloquial Malayalam and derived from not less than 1,061 verb stems has revealed the following proportion between native and Sanskrit stems: 1.7 : 1. Even the basic core of the vocabulary of Malayalam has been penetrated into by Sanskrit items such as *nakham* (nail), *mukham* (face), *bhārya* (wife), *bhaṛttāvə* (husband). Many of the common verbal forms in present-day Malayalam, such as *udikkuka* (to rise), *astamikkuka* (to set), *anumōdikkuka* (to felicitate), *snēhikkuka* (to love), *vyavasāyavatkarikkuka* (to industrialize) are derived from Sanskrit roots.

Indo-Aryan loan words in Malayalam, which have come into the language from the Middle Indo-Aryan sources such as the Prakrits and Pali (e.g. *attāṇi* 'porters' rest'; *oṭṭakam* 'camel'; *lākkə* 'aim'; *kēmam* 'excellence'; *vaṭṭam* 'circle') and those from the New Indo-Aryan sources like Hindi and Marathi (e.g. *kiccaṭi* 'a kind of curry'; *caṭṭiṇi* 'ground condiment'; *tōppə* 'grove'; *ḍāvə* 'device'; *pāṛāvə* 'sentry') together make a few hundreds.

Borrowals from Arabic are detected in the domain of judiciary (e.g. *haṛji* 'a petition'; *vakkālattə* 'agency'; *sannatə* 'diploma'), whereas those from Persian are related to governmental procedure (e.g. *yādāstə* 'a memorandum'; *gumastan* 'a writer'; *śipāyi* 'peon'; *śupāṛśa* 'recommendation').

Portuguese, Dutch and French have together contributed about 200 items to Malayalam and it appears that, as the Portuguese influence was earlier and more dominant, the contribution of Portuguese has been at a larger scale than that of either Dutch or French. Items traceable to Syriac are confined to the variety of the language employed by the clergy in connection with the liturgies and rituals in churches.

As regards the influence exerted on the Malayalam language the position of English is second only to that of Sanskrit. The borrowing from English is a continuing process and compiling a complete list of English loan words in Malayalam would be an extremely difficult task. There are many areas such as science and technology, business and administration, education and literature, transport and politics, modern medicine and refreshments, dress and etiquette, furniture and utensils, in which English words have gained remarkable recognition and even replaced native expressions if there were any. In addition to many hundreds of individual lexical items borrowed from English into present-day Malayalam, there are about 120 idiomatic phrasal expressions of English origin which met with in the speech and writings of educated Malayalis. Some of these like *kariṅkāli* (black leg), *śitasamaram* (cold war), *veḷḷāna* (white elephant) appear to have struck root in the language whereas some others like *raṇṭattavum kūṭṭimuṭṭikkuka* (to make both ends meet) and *pallum nakhavum koṇṭetiṛkkuka* (fight tooth and nail) seem to be still under trial. The day-to-day conversations of educated Malayalis and the scientific register of Malayalam are interlarded with thousands of borrowals from English, the motive behind this being either need-filling or prestige.

Development

The most significant attempt to reform the Malayalam script so as to make it better suited for fast typewriting and printing has taken place in 1968 under the auspices of the State Government, as per suggestions by a committee of experts. Instead of 500 different types required for handling the traditional script, the present system which is equally efficient needs only 90. This has been achieved by reducing the number of special letters representing less frequent conjunct consonants and combinations of vowels with consonants. No radical change in the shape of the letters is involved. The changeover is effected step by step through newspapers and periodicals, textbooks and all Government publications.

Malayalam has already gained recognition as the language of administration in some spheres in Kerala State. All communications in Malayalam, addressed to the Government are now to be replied to in the same language.

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Further, Malayalam is the language of administration in certain departments like the Panchayats at certain levels where there is greater degree of direct contact between the public and the administration. The declared policy of the State Government is to make Malayalam the language of administration from the secretariat to the lowest level. Malayalam is also expected to replace English in the proceedings including the arguments and judgments in all courts from district and sessions courts downwards. Problems of standardizing the use of Malayalam in official records are being identified and solutions chalked out.

Since Independence, Malayalam has become more and more acceptable as the medium of instruction in high school classes and it has now been generally accepted that Malayalam, like any other language, has the potentiality of developing as the vehicle of knowledge at all conceivable levels, provided it is employed for the purpose. In addition to few individual attempts to propagate modern knowledge through the medium of Malayalam, the leadership provided by the State Institute of Languages and a private organization known as *Śāstrasāhityapariṣattu* (Forum of Scientific Literature) deserve special mention in this connection. Publications of the above Institute numbering over 600 include a dozen glossaries of technical terms in different branches of knowledge and original contributions as well as translations from English, all of which together have a commendable coverage.

The much debated problem of technical terms does not seem to hinder the progress of scientific literature in Malayalam, since it has now generally been accepted that, above all, ability to express the intended idea in the given context is the best test of suitability of a technical term, as in the case of any word of normal currency. The Keralites' attitude to language has always been remarkably liberal. But for this, expressions like *ilāstikata* (elasticity), *kāppilārita* (capilarity), *pāragamyata* (permeability), and *pampal* (pumping) could not have found their way into the technical literature of Malayalam. There are, of course, professional pundits who frown at such neologisms infiltrating into the language almost incessantly. Obviously in this context the duties and responsibilities of the language planners in Kerala need to be clearly specified, particularly in regard to standardization and modernization.

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Marathi

KAMAL N. VELANKAR

Marāṭhī, the language of Mahārāshṭra, is the southernmost Indo-Aryan language spoken in India with its speakers numbering well over four crores. The name of the language (with the earlier form Marhāṭi), as well as that of the region is derived from the people known as Mahāraṭṭas or Mahāraṭṭhas who were presumably not the original inhabitants of the area but belonged to a tribe of immigrant Aryans. Mahārāshṭra is mentioned in the Prākrit works *Mahāvaṃsa* and *Dīpavaṃsa* (5th century B.C.) in the Prakrit form 'Maharaṭṭha' (though at this time the region did not cover all the area that is today covered by the name 'Mahārāshṭra').

The origin of all modern Indo-Aryan languages is ultimately found in Sanskrit, with the *Ṛgveda* as its earliest representative text. The *Ṛgveda* however is believed to represent only one (the north-western) dialect of Old

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Indo-Aryan (OIA). The dialectal differentiation in OIA is indicated by the differences found in Vedic and classical Sanskrit, which were due to the fact that the classical language was based on the central dialect of Old Indo-Aryan, as against the north-western dialect of the *Ṛgveda*.

The second major stage in the development of Indo-Aryan languages is the emergence of the Prākrits (this stage being called 'Middle Indo-Aryan'). The Prākrits are characterized by a considerable simplification of consonant clusters as well as of the complex nominal declension and verbal conjugation found in OIA. The three prominent prākrits were Śaurasenī, Māgadhi and Mahārāshṭrī. The name Mahārāshṭrī would suggest that it was the one spoken in the area of Mahārāshṭra and this belief is supported by Daṇḍin (*Kāvyādarśa* 1.35) who says that the best form of Prākrit is the one found in Mahārāshṭra. (*Mahārāśṭrāśrayām bhāṣām prakṛṣṭam prākṛtam viduh*). It would thus be the ancestor of Modern Marāṭhi. Sten Konow in his article 'Mahārāśṭrī & Marāṭhī (*Indian Antiquary*, vol. XXXII, 1903, pp. 180–92) has argued that Mahārāshṭrī was the Prākrit spoken in Mahārāshṭra and that Marāṭhī is the descendent of this Prākrit. In support of his argument he points out various similarities between Mahārāshṭrī and Marāṭhī. This view, however, is not universally accepted, the reason being the various linguistic differences that are also found between Mahārāshṭrī and Marāṭhī.

In view of the fact that borrowing of features from neighbouring dialects is frequently observed in the history of languages, this should not be considered as an argument against Mahārāshṭrī being considered the ancestor of Marāṭhī.

Though in between Mahārāshṭrī and Marāṭhī there is a linguistic stage known as Apabhraṃśa (Late Middle Indo-Aryan) signifying some sound changes and a further simplification of nominal and verbal systems, Marāṭhī can be said to have developed from the Mahārāshṭrī Prākrit.

Marathi and its Sister Languages

According to the inner and outer circle theory of Hoernle, the Aryans came into India in two bands. The first group that had settled in the western Gangetic Doab and the midland were driven away from their home by the second band. The language of the newcomers is represented by Western Hindi which is the language of the inner circle while Lahndi, Sindhi, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Bihari are the languages of the outer circle, representatives of the speech of the former band of Aryans. An observation made by Dr R. P. Chanda (*Indo-Aryan Races*, pp. 59-60) that the Inner Aryans were dolichocephalic (long-headed) while the Outer Aryans were brachycephalic (round-headed) seems to support the theory. Grierson (*Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. I, p. 116) accepts the division of languages into the inner and the outer circles, though according to him it is not necessary to postulate two distinct invasions of Aryans to account for it. Grierson points out that the languages of the outer circle agree in precisely the same linguistic features in which they differ from Western Hindi. Further, even Dardic speeches share most of these (common) characteristics of outer languages. S. K. Chatterji disagrees with this theory on the ground that the linguistic characteristics described by Grierson may have developed independently in the various outer languages. He also points out that there is no conclusive evidence to show that the brachycephalic hordes were Aryans. He thus concludes that 'the attempt to establish on anthropometrical and ethnological grounds a ring of 'Outer' Aryandom round an 'Inner' Aryan core is as unconvincing as that on linguistic grounds' (*The Origin and Development of the Bengali Language*, p. 33).

It has therefore been considered advisable to group the new Indo-Aryan languages into smaller groups such as Lahnda and Sindhi of the North-West, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Gujarati and Western Hindi as the central group, with Eastern Hindi standing midway between these languages and the further eastern dialects Oriya, Bengali and Assamese. Marathi, with Konkani, forms the southern group.

Linguistic Peculiarities

The contrast between the dental affricates, particularly c, j and the palatal affricates č, ǰ is a striking feature of the Marathi phonological system. This contrast is noticed when the sounds appear before the vowels a and ā. Before e, i the palatal affricates occur while before u and o, the dental affricates are found. Another peculiar feature is the presence of the aspirated forms of the nasals m, n, ṇ (as in mhaṇūn, nhāṇ, kaṇherī) and of r, l, v (tarhā, kolhā, kevhā, etc.).

Morphologically Marathī preserves the neuter gender which is lost in most Indo-Aryan languages. There are no formal markers by which the gender of a noun can be indicated, e.g. tāl, pāl, sāl, though all formally very similar, belong to the masculine, feminine and neuter gender respectively. In the absence of such markers it is only the variable adjectives [which have different endings for the three genders in the singular: for example, Kaḷā (m) Kaḷ-*i* (f) Kaḷ*a* (n), as well as in the plural Kaḷē (m) Kaḷ*yā* (f) Kaḷ-*i* (n)], that indicate the genders of the nouns qualified.

The verbal conjugation of Marāṭhī, besides distinguishing various tense forms, also expresses distinctions of number, gender and person, e.g. in the past tense forms, we have

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mī gelo	'I went' (m)	āmhī gelo 'we went' (m, f)
mī gele	'I went' (f)	
tū gelās	'You went' (m)	tumhī gelāt 'You went' (m, f)
tū gelīs	'You went' (f)	
to gelā	'He went' (m)	to gele 'they went' (m)
tī gelī	'She went' (f)	tyā gelyā 'they went' (f)
te gelā	'It went'	tī gelī 'they went' (n)

Another feature of verbal conjugation not shared widely by the Indo-Aryan languages is the formation of the future by adding the suffix 'i' to the present form as in jāīl, karīl, etc. As regards the vocabulary of Marathi, it is but natural that a major part of it is traced back to Sanskrit. A distinction is to be made here between *tadbhavas*, words that have undergone various changes in the course of the development of Indo-Aryan and appear in Marathi in this modified form, and *tatsamas* which are direct borrowings from Sanskrit. Thus bahīṇ 'sister' is a *tadbhava* word while *bhagini*, with the same meaning is a *tatsama*. Some have their origin in what Hemachandra has referred to as Deśī words (for example, chikhal, topī, jhād). The two Dravidian neighbours of Marathi are Kannada and Telugu and words have been borrowed from both these languages. Words like guḍhī, kirkoḷ, aḍkittā are of Kannada origin while anārsā, kiḍukmiḍuk, gherī have come from Telugu. Some borrowings like jhālar, buḍbuḍā, jhopḍī are traced to Munḍā languages. Besides these, many words came into Marathi from the languages of the foreign rulers. For example, while śahar, bājār, dukān, julum, huśār, kāgad, jamīn, darvāja, are Perso-Arabic loans, baṭāṭā, baśī, pagār, istrī are borrowed from Portuguese. Borrowings from English are so numerous, and so much a part of everyday Marathi, that they hardly need to be illustrated.

Dialects. A variety of geographical and social dialects is observed in Marathi. The major dialects are as follows: *Deśī:* This is the dialect of the Deśa, its western limit being the dialects of the Koṅkan and the eastern one being Varhādī. The language spoken around Pune is considered as standard.

Varhādī. This is the variety spoken in Vidarbha. Some of its special linguistic features are: frequent shortening of final long vowels as in 'mi' (standard mī) māhi (standard majhī); use of 'n' for standard 'ṇ', kon, pāni, (koṇ, pāṇī), identical form of the verb for the second and third person singular as in tū alā, tū gelā, etc.

Haḷbi, a sub-variety of Varhāḍī is spoken by the Haḷabs around Chānda, Rāipur, Bhanḍārā, etc. It is a mixture of Marathi, Oriya and Chattisgarhi. *Khāndeshī* (Ahirāṇī) is spoken in Khāndesh (comprising the Dhule and Jalgaon districts) as the name suggests. It shows such a considerable influence of Gujarati that Grierson had classified it as a dialect of Gujarati. It uses 'ch' for standard Marathi 's' as in chōḍ (sōḍ), y for standard ḷ as in Kāyā (Kāḷā) nāray (nāraḷ) and 'n' for standard 'ṇ' as in mhanūn, pāni (mhaṇūn, pāṇi). Gender and person distinction is not made in the conjugation of the present tense. *Ḍāṅgi* is spoken in the Dāṅg area which lies on the border line of Maharashtra and Gujarat. This dialect too shows a combination of the linguistic features of Marathi and Gujarati.

Konkani. On the western coast of Maharashtra, the language of Thana, Kulaba and the northern part of the Ratnagiri district is fairly similar to the standard speech and is referred to by Grierson as 'Koṅkaṇ Standard'. He uses the name Koṅkaṇī for the language spoken from the south of Rajapur onwards. Kuḍāḷi is the northernmost dialect of Koṇkaṇī. The second major sub-group is the Koṅkaṇī of Goa. Further to the south we have the Koṅkaṇī of Karwar (North Canara) and that of South Canara, the two forms being quite close to each other. The latter has a larger percentage of Kannada words. Even in Cochin, the Gauda Saraswats speak a dialect at home which is connected with the Koṅkaṇī of South Canara.

Koṅkaṇī differs from other dialects of Marathi in as much as it has had a sizeable amount of literature not possessed by the other dialects. The Sahitya Akademi has now recognized Koṅkaṅī as a separate language.

The Script. Besides a modified version of Devanāgari known as Baḷbodh, a script called Moḍī was used in Maharashtra. It is believed to have been introduced by Hemāḍpanta, who was the Minister of the Yadava Kings of Devgiri in the 13th century. Its special merit was that writing could be done with greater speed, as the letters could be joined to one another. It was widely used till the 18th century. The records of Peshwas were written in the Moḍī script. Personal letters were often written in Moḍī. Now Devanāgari is the only script used.

Devanāgari can be described as basically a syllabic script, the vowels used along with the consonants in the formation of syllables being indicated by special diacritic marks attached to the consonants. Some Marathi sounds cannot be distinguished in this script, particularly the dental 'c', 'j' and palatal 'č', 'ǰ'. The symbol for retroflex 'ṣ' has a very limited use, namely, in words borrowed from Sanskrit. It has a very complex system of signs to indicate consonant clusters. Whether a script reform can improve the situation remains to be seen.

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Oriya

D. P. PATTANAYAK

The Oriya language with its dialects is spoken primarily in Orissa. At the time of reorganization of Orissa as a separate linguistic unit (1956), many Oriya-speaking tracts now in the neighbouring states of Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh were not conceded to the new State. According to the 1971 Census, Oriya is spoken by about 20,000,000 people. The spread of Oriya speakers in the neighbouring states may be seen from the following table:

	Absolute figures		*Percentage variation*	
	1961	1971	1951–61	1961–71
Andhra Pradesh	1,89,497	2,25,878	+15.78	+12.03
Assam	1,45,488	1,50,226	+27.58	+ 2.88
Bihar	3,02,951	3,44,638	− 3.14	+13.75
Madhya Pradesh	3,04,297	4,83,558	+ 0.30	+24.16
West Bengal	2,12,890	1,52,010	+26.21	−28.91

The above table does not faithfully represent the total number of Oriya speakers outside Orissa. It is a good indicator of the processes of culture maintenance and culture loss and policies of different state governments towards linguistic minorities.

Origin

Oriya is a member of the eastern branch of the Indo-Aryan sub-family of the Indo-European family of languages. In spite of its admitted antiquity there is a lot of controversy about its exact origin and process of development. On the basis of comparative reconstruction it has been demonstrated that among the Oriya, Bengali, Assamese languages constituting the eastern sub-group of the Indo-Aryan sub-family, Oriya branched off earlier, then Bengali and Assamese separated from one another. (For discussion see, Pattanayak, D. P., *A Controlled Historical Reconstruction of Oriya, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi*, Mouton, The Hague, 1966.) On the basis of the interpretation of available historical and linguistic data, it can be said without fear of contradiction that the process of Aryanization of Orissa started before 232 B.C. Beginning from this pre-Ashokan phenomenon it is possible to demonstrate through the occurrence of Oriya words in the Hathigumpa inscription of the 1st century through the occurrence of Oriya sentences in the inscriptions of the 8th and 9th centuries, the developmental history which culminates in the first Oriya inscription, the Urajam stone inscriptions of 1051.

Literary Tradition

Oriya has a long and rich literary tradition. The earliest extant literary work is the *Mahabharata* of Sarala Das, a transcreation with the original stamp of the author written between the 14th and 15th centuries. Study of Oriya language in terms of its use in literature yields the following six broad eras:

(i) Sarala Period, 1400–1500;
(ii) Santha or Bhakti Literature Period, 1500–1700;
(iii) The Riti Period, 1700–1850;
(iv) The Period of Vaishnav Lyrics, 1750–1850;
(v) The Modern Period, 1850–1950; and
(vi) The Contemporary Period, 1950 onwards.

Needless to say, this is a broad division into periods. Quite often there is overlapping of literary creations cutting across these divisions. In particular the period of Vaishnav lyrics and the period of Riti Kavyas ran concurrently for quite some time between 1750 and 1850 though the latter had an earlier beginning.

Vocables

From an emphasis on *Prakritik* elements, which are better known as *Desi* and also includes Munda elements on the

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early phase, it is interesting to mark the blend of different regional *Prakritik* elements, Sanskritic elements, Dravidian elements, Perso-Arabic and English elements in the vocabulary of Oriya. Many of these are so well assimilated that it is difficult to identify them even by a native speaker. Besides these, limited number of Portuguese, French and Chinese vocables have also found their way into the language.

Dialects. A popular saying divides Orissa into three major dialect zones, the Gadjat (ex-State areas), the coastal Orissa and Western Orissa. None of these three are homogeneous areas nor do they exhaust the major dialect divisions. In addition to the above three, one has at least to count Ganjam and Koraput in South Orissa where in the latter Desia, the variety of Oriya spoken, is the *lingua franca* for all the tribal language speakers of that district. The cities of Cuttack and Puri, have their own dialects. Bounded by Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bengal on three sides it is only natural that the bordering regions would show impacts of Telugu, Hindi and Bengali respectively. Halbi and Bhatri are the two major dialects which deserve special mention as efforts are constantly made to identify the former with Marathi and the latter with Hindi.

Script. Oriya script is essentially syllabic. However with the loss of final vowels in some variety of Oriya the final consonants assume alphabetic qualities. If this persists, then like Nagari, one may have to describe the Oriya script as syllabo-alphabetic. For example, in the word *bhala* the *la* is syllabic, but in the word *bhalgā* even if the full form of *ga* is written, it is to be interpreted merely as a consonant.

Oriya Script has developed from Brahmi and shares this common base with the other major scripts of India excluding Roman and Arabic. The round head of the script is ascribed to the palm leaf and the iron stylus which were used for writing Oriya in early times. Oriya like the other modern Indian languages has adopted the Sanskrit alphabet system. Lack of sound spelling correspondences resulting from language change and consequent superfluity of symbols poses problems in learning the language.

Phonology: Analysis of the spoken standard of coastal dialect of Orissa yields 38 consonants and 6 vowels phonemes and a phoneme of nasalization. The consonants can be further subdivided into 5×4 stop and affricate subsystem, 2 fricatives, 4 nasals, 2 semi-vowels, 2 laterals and a trill. The vowels can be divided into three heights in front and back positions.

All consonants except /ṇ ḷ/ occur initially. /ḍ ḍh/ have flap allophones intervocalically and finally. Consonant clusters having nasal consonants as first member and a stop as second member always have a homorganic nasal before the stop. In clusters involving /ḍ ḍh/ other than those preceded by a nasal, one gets flap allophones, which often are the first members in the cluster. /w/ is of extremely low frequency and occurs only in loan words and in clusters. All consonants except /gh, th, bh, y, w/ occur finally. It may be noted that most Oriya words end in a vowel. The words ending in consonants are mostly either loan words or second person imperative forms; /h/ occurs finally after the vowel in a few exclamatory words. Of the many consonant clusters only /kr, kl, kḷ, khy, gr, gl, gḷ, gy, ghr, ḍr, tr, dr, dw, dhy, pr, br, bhr, by, mr, mḷ, sk, skh, st, sn, sr, sl, sw, hr/ occur initially. Most of the words beginning with initial clusters are loan words from Sanskrit and English. There are no final clusters in the language.

All the vowels with the exception of /o/ occur oral and nasal. /o/ occurs only oral and it has extremely limited occurrence in the final position. There is a contrast between long and short vowels in certain positions, but no such contrast exists in the final position. Instead of accepting the component of length as a phoneme, the long vowels here are treated as sequences of two short vowels in keeping with the general patterning of vowel clusters. There are two types of vowel clusters: (i) VV, which may be subdivided into (a) V^1 V^1 (two peaks-one peak) and (b) V^1 V^2 (two peaks); (ii) VS (a peak and a margin). Some of the clusters carry a marginal functional load. There are some kinds of vowel assimilation operating in the language. Mid-vowels are lowered before low vowels and raised before high vowels within a word. Before and after retroflex consonants like /ḷṇḍ/ the high and mid-vowels are lowered.

Morphology

It is necessary to set up a grammatical category in Oriya which may be called 'Nouns'. Oriya nouns distinguish two numbers, singular and plural. Usually singularity is indicated by the suffixation of -e to the nouns with or without the quantifiers goṭi/goṭa (used with non-human nouns) or *jəṇə* (used with humans). Plurality is indicated by the addition of pluralizers like *manə* (with human nouns) and *gudi*(*kə*)/*guda*(*kə*) (non-human).

Oriya has no grammatical gender. Prefixing words for male or female, suffixing derivatives replacing words internal vocalic are some of the devices used for listing general definition in the language.

Case relation in Oriya is expressed by post-positions. It is possible to establish five cases in Oriya: nominative accusative, objective, ablative, genitive and locative. Nominative is not marked and the post-positions for the rest are -ku, -ru, -rə and -re respectively. There are contradictions and modifications of their shape depending on the final vowel of the word to which they are attached or the manner of speech.

Oriya pronouns distinguish three persons. There are three degrees of social distance—familiar, polite, honorific—

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reflected in the second persons. The pronouns have oblique bases before post-positions.

The adjectives in Oriya may occur either in pre-substantival (attributive) or post-substantival (predicative) position. Usually the attributive adjective and the following nouns act as a base to which post-positions are added. But the adjective in this case takes the post-position directly when the following noun is optionally deletable.

Most pronouns can be used as adjectives in Oriya. Pronouns may be subdivided as personal, co-relative, relative, interrogative, indefinite, and reflexive. The co-relative distinguishes between the proximate and the distant. All of these may further be seen in a matrix of quantity, quality, size and direction. It may be noted that the proximate is indicated by *e-*, the distant by *s-* (dialectally *t-*) the relative by *i-* and the interrogative by *k-*. The reflexive pronoun in Oriya is *nije*, having an oblique base *nij*, which takes post-positions.

Numerals may be of two types, the quantifiers which give the quantity or entities and the classifiers, which classify entities according to different criteria. But quantifiers may further be subdivided into the cardinals, the ordinals and the fractions. The cardinals may constitute of (a) the basic numbers, (b) the tens and (c) the rest.

Verbs in Oriya are inflected for person number. The finite form of the Oriya verb may have four tenses: present, past, future and conditional. Each of these tenses may further be in one of three modes: simple, imperfect and perfect. The imperative may be added to this set as it yields forms in all the tenses and modes.

The finite verb in the present yields 15 forms because of the neutralization of distinctions between first and third (familiar), singular, first plural and second familiar singular, second polite singular and plural, second honorific singular and plural, third honorific singular and third plural. Three of these forms are due to the inclusive/exclusive distinction in the first person plural. Each finite verb in the past, because of neutralization of second familiar singular and first plural (exclusive) as in *jibu*, second polite singular and second plural as in *jiba*, second honorific singular and plural as in *jibe*, third polite/honorific singular and third plural as in *jibe*, also yields 15 forms. In the present, the inclusive/exclusive distinction adds three forms to the 12 regular present forms whereas in the past this distinction does not add any new forms.

In the future each finite form yields 18 forms. The second familiar singular and first plural (exclusive), second polite singular and second plural, second honorific singular and plural, third polite/honorific singular and third plural, second familiar singular and third familiar singular are neutralized in future. Like the present, the inclusive/exclusive distinction adds three forms to the 15 regular future forms.

The non-finite forms are formed by the addition of perfective -i and imperfective -u. Another kind of non-finite form is formed by the addition of indeclinable -e which acts as the binder between two clauses. There is a contingent construction with *-ɔnt* added to the verb root with person number suffix.

The Oriya particles are a class of indeclinables which participate in syntactic constructions. Some of the major classes defined according to their function in a construction are the adverbials, the question words, the completive particles, and the negative particles.

Syntax

Three sentence types are broadly discerned in Oriya. They may be labelled as (a) Simple (b) Compound (c) Complex.

When two or more simple sentences or clauses are linked by connectives it is a compound sentence.

When two or more clauses are joined together by means other than the use of connectives and in such a way that one is an independent clause and the rest are dependent, then it may be called a complex sentence.

Some of the major complex sentence types are given below:

The contingent constructions;
The conditional constructions; and
The relative constructions.

A simple sentence is constituted of a noun phrase and a verb phrase. The verb phrase is optionally deleted particularly in the copula sentences.

The major types of simple sentences are given below:

(i) The copula sentence;
(ii) The causative sentence;
(iii) The transitive sentence;
(iv) The intransitive sentence; and
(v) Double transitive sentence.

Some of these above types may be further sub-grouped. They are not discussed here partially because this area of the Oriya grammar has been least analysed and partially because of the limitation imposed on this presentation.

The preferred word order is subject, object and verb. The word order can be changed either for stylistic reasons or for reasons of emphasis.

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Punjabi

ATAMJIT SINGH

Punjabi (also used with the alternate spelling 'Pañjābi') is one of the regional languages spoken in India and Pakistan. It is an Indo-Aryan language having a close affinity with Hindi and Urdu. It is a distinct language with a standard form and dialectal variations. As per 1971 Census Punjabi is spoken by 1,64,49,573 people in India.

The name Punjabi is Persian in origin, meaning the language thriving in the geographical area known as the Punjab (the land of five rivers). The earliest reference to this name is in Sunder Das[1] (16th century), a contemporary of the Mughal king Akbar, and a Rajasthani poet of some repute. Punjabi is thus comparatively a recent name, covering all the dialects of its inhabitants.

Though spoken by all the Punjabis living in India and Pakistan, Punjabi had long been identified with the Sikhs for whom it carries the authority of their sacred scriptures. It is spoken by the Punjabi immigrants in Britain, United States, Canada, Middle East and certain African countries. In some countries it has established its own distinct literary identity. Although spoken by a vast majority of people in Pakistani Punjab, it is not recognized as an official language, which purpose is served by Urdu. Likewise, in the Punjab some communities who normally speak Punjabi, use Hindi or Urdu for purposes other than day-to-day communication.

As far as the linguistic boundaries of Punjabi are concerned, it is bounded on the east by the vernacular Hindustani of Ambala and the Bāngru of Karnal and East Hissar. To its south, it has Bāgṛi and Bīkānēri dialects of Rājasthāni. To its north and north-east, it is bounded by Pahāri dialects of the lower ranges of the Himalayas and in the west it merges imperceptibly with Lahndi. It is neither possible nor desirable to demarcate neat linguistic zones. The existence of a variety of languages in India should only be interpreted in terms of linguistic features which have successively split the one-speech-community into several. Looked at from this angle, the linguistic boundaries of Punjab extend much beyond the present socio-political limits of the present Punjab. Different languages and dialects spoken in the Punjab and its surrounding areas represent a kind of chain-continuity. They do not give us a territorial boundary at which a particular sound-change or grammatical feature terminates.[2] This clearly shows that Punjabi is a language which at one time covered such vast areas as those of Baluchistan, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province, besides the Punjab. Any attempt to mark clear-cut boundaries on such a continuous linguistic terrain would result only in confusion.

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Origin

Punjabi emerged as an independent language from Ap(a)-bhraṁśa some time in the early 11th century, the period regarded as the beginning of the modern vernaculars. Different scholars have propounded different theories regarding the origin of Punjabi. Some scholars such as George Grierson (1851–1941), Bawa Budh Singh (Bāvā Bud Sing), Banarsi Das Jain (Banārsi Dās Jain, 1889–1954), Duni Chand (Duni Cand), Mohan Singh Dewana (b. 1905), V. B. Arun (Arūn, 1920–75) trace its descent from the Śaurseni Apbhraṁśa. Some like Premprakash Singh (Prem Prakāś Sing, b. 1926) trace its beginning from *Kekeiy* Apbhraṁśa. Grierson places it in the larger family of Western Hindi, but warns against treating it as a dialect thereof. All Indo-Aryan languages and dialects go back to the speech of the period of the *Ṛgveda* as their ultimate source. It is possible that Punjabi attained its distinct identity during the 11th and 12th centuries, though the process of the emergence of the modern Indian vernaculars must have begun much earlier. Piara Singh Padam (Piārā Sing 'Padam', b. 1921) is of the view that during this period two Apbhraṁśas, namely *kekaiy* and *takki* were the spoken languages of the Punjab, the first prevalent in the East Punjab and the latter in the West Punjab. The present Punjabi seems to be the descendant of these two Apbhraṁśas, though Śaurseni and Paiśāci have also contributed considerably towards the development of the modern form of literary Punjabi.

As indicated already, Punjabi as a member of the Aryan family can trace its roots to Old Indo-Aryan Vedic language. Many Punjabi scholars consider Vedic Sanskrit as the mother speech of the Indo-Aryan group to which Punjabi belongs.[3]

Punjabi and Sanskrit

Whereas one point of view characterizes Punjabi as genealogically related to Vedic Sanskrit through Apbhraṁśas and Prākrits, there is another equally vocal group of Pakistani scholars who deny any direct relationship between Punjabi and Vedic Sanskrit and trace its origin to some non-Aryan drāvar (Muṇḍā) group of languages spoken by the inhabitants of yore of the Sind Valley. They argue that Aryans started migrating to northern parts of India around 1500 B.C., but the civilization which has been discovered as a result of the excavations in the Sind Valley is more than five thousand years old.

Pakistani scholars, who support the above opinion are Ain-al-Haq Faridkoti[4] (En-al-haq Farīdkōti,), Abdul Ghafur Qureshi[5] (Abdul Gafūr Qureśi, b. 1922) and Shahbaz Malik[6] (Śahbāz Malik, b. 1937). They have yet to prove their contention in a scientific manner. Motivated as they are by the desire to find their own independent identity, they seem to be ignoring hard facts about the close relationship of modern Punjabi with its ancient ancestor, Vedic Sanskrit.

On the Indian side, Ram Vilas Sharma (Rām Vilās Śarmā) has propounded a similar theory.[7] He says that the languages of the northern parts of *Baresaghir* (subcontinent) are based on those languages which in the olden times were prevalent among the people along with Sanskrit. Some Punjabi scholars on this side of the border subscribe to this view. They say that Punjabi is not a direct descendant of Sanskrit. Yet another scholar Harbhajan Singh (Harbajan Siṅgh, b. 1920) is of the view that the Punjabi lexicon, though related to Sanskrit-Prakrit-Apbhraṁśa, is part of a language which in its nature is different from Sanskrit. Sanskrit, he opines, moves in the direction of purity (*śudhata*) whereas Punjabi is inclined towards establishing contact with other languages. To him, purity and expansion respectively are the structural principles of these languages.[8] Sanskrit wishes to preserve and perpetuate its age-old aesthetic accomplishment, and Punjabi, on the contrary, tries to establish contact with the new tide with a view to serving the growing needs. The two languages thus move in opposite directions and their trends are also dissimilar. Emphasis on purity is born out of a relatively established and stabilized situation of life and it is a means of self-preservation. Every established life has its own moral principle; the structural point of this moral principle is purity.

Phonological and Morphological Features

As an Indo-Aryan language, Punjabi has passed through three stages of development, viz. Old Indo-Aryan, Middle Indo-Aryan and Modern Indo-Aryan. At the last stage, there was a branching off into a number of modern Indian languages like Hindi, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. Structurally Punjabi is close to Hindi. An important distinct feature of the phonology of Punjabi is the development of tones from the old Sanskrit voiced aspirates. For every voiced aspirate in the initial position of a word, the Punjabi equivalent will be a corresponding voiceless consonant followed by a low tone. Historically, the place of voiced aspirates (*bh, dh, ḍh, jh, gh*) has been taken by the tones, which now make a characteristic feature of Punjabi phonology. Though in Punjabi orthography, the Gurmukhi script has symbols corresponding to the voiced aspirates, they rather help in the phonetic realization of the tonal element. The transformations occur as follows:

voiced aspirate > voiceless stop followed by a low tone on the following vowel

Examples (italicized vowels indicate the difference in tone):

bha > p*a*—e.g. bhai—p*a*i (brother)
dha > t*a*—e.g. dhobi—t*o*bi (washerman)

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jha>c*a*—e.g. jhāṛu—*cā*ṛu (broom)
ḍha>ṭa—e.g. ḍholu—ṭ*o*l (drum)
gha>k*a*—e.g. ghah—k*a* (grass)
–vd. aspirate } vd. stop preceded by high tone
–vd. aspirate }
–bh-vd e.g. labh–l*a*b
gadha-g*a*da

Due to the development of tone in Punjabi phonology the oppositional network has undergone a drastic change. In comparison to Hindi which has four pairs of opposition on each point of articulation, Punjabi has only two now, e.g.

Punjabi	*Hindi*
p	p
b	b
ph	ph
	bh
p:b	p:b
p:ph	p:ph
	b:bh
	ph:bh

In the words of Prof. H. S. Gill, the tones like other segmental phonemes are in opposition with each other. He, therefore, suggests that they must be analyzed on paradigmatic basis as in /*ca*/, /ca/ and /*ca*/. Another notable feature is contrastive accent in Punjabi as /*c*uk*a*/ (completed) and /*cu*k*a*/ (help lift). This characteristic of the language can be compared with that of languages such as English, German, or Russian.[9]

Morphologically, the case, number and gender forming markers are quite different in Hindi and Punjabi. Still the two languages have many mutual agreements and borrowings. In fact they have more agreement with each other in morphology than in phonology. Both are—'ā dialects' (the ending of a common class of masculine nouns and of adjectives qualifying them as distinct from 'ō dialects'); they form their direct plural and oblique singular with /e/ in 'ā-stems' and they use 'nē' as postposition for the agent case, the oblique pronominal forms *is*, *us*, *jis*, *kis* and the termination *gā* for the future tense. Although the two languages have developed their distinct phonologies and morphologies, the affinities they show for each other are quite significant. It is on account of these common traits that Punjabi and Hindi are mutually intelligible.[10]

Development

The literary material available, of the oldest forms of Punjabi and other Indo-Aryan languages is not adequate. And, then, it is not safe to rely upon this material recorded centuries after its composition. At the time of the emergence of New Indo-Aryan speech forms, the Apbhraṁśas spoken in areas of present Punjab do show a clear evidence of some of the features of present speech form, but it is only in the 12th and the 13th centuries that Lahndi form of Punjabi speech clearly emerged in the compositions ascribed to Farid Shakar-Ganj (Farīd Śakkarganj, 1173–1266). Even the authenticity of the received texts of Farid Shakar-Ganj is doubtful as it appears to have been modified according to the literary idiom of the 16th century, at the time they were embodied in the Ādi Grantha (1604). The works of Guru Nanak (Guru Nānak, 1469–1526) included in the Adi Grantha have been received in their original form. Guru Nanak's compositions bear testimony to the fact that the Punjabi language had developed a variety of literary styles. The distinctive feature of the Punjabi linguistic culture from the medieval times to the modern is multilingualism. It has been accepted as one of the basic principles of literary creation right from the beginning. The language policy of the early poets is the main source of the development of Punjabi language. The assertive existence of multilingualism on our land proves that Punjabi language from the time of its very inception made an attempt to forge new patterns of significance. The linguistic expansion and cohesion as witnessed in the literary traditions of Punjab finds its continuity right up to the beginning of the 20th century. The Punjabi writers throughout have been writing in more than one linguistic medium giving distinct identity to their linguistic culture. In fact a mutual interaction between different languages and dialects of the region at the level of literary discourse has been so persistent that the languages have effectively contributed to their mutual development. For example, V. B. Arun indicates the contribution of Punjabi in the making of Hindi as we know it today. He counts a number of lexical items so commonly used in Hindi as having had their origin in Punjabi or Punjabi forms.[11] We may agree with Grierson that Hindi as a vernacular is that form of Western Hindi which shows the *Braj bhākhā* dialect shading off into Punjabi.[12] Similarly the role of Punjabi in the development of Urdu has also been pointed out. It is held by some scholars that Urdu grew out of Punjabi. It was T. Grahame Bailey who mooted this idea. It may be an extreme view, but the point to be noted is the manner in which languages influence each other contributing to mutual expansion. With this multilingual practice, Punjabi genius revolted against all kinds of linguistic conservatism.

After April 1968, when Punjabi was made the official language of the Indian state of Punjab, it has shown a clear tendency towards standardization. With the advent of higher education being provided through its medium, the demand on its competence has increased considerably. The language is at the doorsteps of a written culture, which is altogether different from the world of the spoken word. To become a competent and effective medium for ushering in a written culture, the Punjabi language has to free itself from

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its redundancy, shed off sentimental love of its past, and reduce to the minimum the area of indeterminacy in written expressions. With the fast expanding linguistic competence, we have to continue creating a scientific idiom of performance. Whereas on this side of the Punjab, the language is making rapid strides towards standardization, on the other side of the border the nostalgia for the spoken dialect seeks to maintain its original simplicity without regard for its all-round development.

Dialects

Punjabi has a standard variety based on the Majhi (Māji) dialect of the central area which covers a substantial area on both sides of the Wagha border. This is the standard form which is spoken by the urban elite, though the speech form of each individual abounds in dialectal features peculiar to his own. The major dialects of the Punjab on both sides of the international lines are given below.

East Punjab. (i) *Bhatiāni*: This dialect of Punjabi is prevalent in the Hissar area of present Haryāna and Bikāner district of Rajasthan. It is also spoken in and around the Tehsils of Fazilka, Mamdot and Ferozepure. (ii) *Puādhi*: The dialect of the eastern part of the Punjab (that is what *puādh* stands for) is *puadhi*. It is spoken in Patiala, Hissar, and Ambala districts together with Nalagarh of the present-day Himachal Pradesh. (iii) *Malwai* or *Mālvi* is the dialect comprising areas of Ludhiana, Ferozepure, Faridkot, Bhatinda and Malerkotla of the Punjab. (iv) *Doābi* is the dialect spoken in the areas between the rivers Beas and Satluj and covers the districts of Jullundur, Hoshiarpur and Kapurthala. (v) *Dogri* till some years ago was considered to be a dialect of Punjabi, but now its claim as a distinct language has been recognized by the National Sahitya Akademi.

West Punjab. In the West Punjab, the chief dialects of Punjabi are: (i) *Pōṭhōhāri* spoken in Rawalpindi and areas around it, (ii) *Dhanni*, spoken in tehsil Chakwal of district Jhelum and its surrounding areas (iii) *Chāchi*, the Chach territory, i.e. Cempbellpore and Hazārā districts and parts of Peshawar. Besides these, there are other dialects: *Shāhpuri*, *Jhāngi*, *Multāni*, *Hindko* and *Sairaiki*, all forming members of the bigger speech form the Lahndi.

Script—Gurmukhi and Persian

The rise of present-day Punjabi has been parallel with the rise of the Gurmukhi script. Gurmukhi was specially evolved for Punjabi by the Sikh gurus and is aptly called 'Gurmukhi'. Gurmukhi is a descendant of Brahmi script. Persian characters were borrowed by Muslim writers for recording their works. But both the scripts weer used with one common purpose, i.e. to serve the needs of all types of social classes and revolt against the rigid and pedantic *Śāstri* (the name then common for Devnāgri and Śārda scripts). Gurmukhi and Persian scripts have preserved the *Desic-Tadbhavic* character of the Punjabi language. Whereas Gurmukhi script is being used for writing Punjabi in the East Punjab, the Muslim writers in Pakistan are using Persian script for their writings.

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Sanskrit

K. KUNJUNNI RAJA

Sanskrit is one of the most important languages of the Indo-European family and has a very rich and continuous history of nearly five thousand years. As a result of the patient and laborious comparative study of the various languages like Sanskrit, Old Persian, Greek, Latin, German and English in the beginning of the 19th century, it has been shown by scholars that all these can be traced back to a common source which is termed Proto-Indo-European (PIE). It is generally believed that the original home of the Indo-Europeans was somewhere in Eastern Europe north of the Black Sea and Western Asia and that the ancestor language (PIE), common to the sub-families was spoken in a fairly unified form, with minor dialectal variations. This ancestral language must have resembled some of its more archaic descendants such as Greek and Sanskrit rather closely.

From the affinity between the Avestan language and the Vedic Sanskrit, it is inferred that the forefathers of the Vedic Aryans and of the Iranians lived together and spoke a common language, Indo-Iranian. Hence the history of the evolution of Sanskrit has to be traced through the Old Indo-Iranian. Eventhough it is assumed that nomadic bands of Aryans migrated into India through the north-west passes in successive waves, there is no reference to this migration in the Rigveda (*Ṛgveda*) the first recorded document of the Indo-Aryans. The Sanskrit language preserves many of the ancient features of PIE in its phonology and morphology, and Indian grammarians like Pāṇini (500 B.C.) have analyzed the language into its constituent elements and described the structure so thoroughly as to make the language almost transparent.

Phonetic System

The phonetic system of Sanskrit consists of the following phonemes:

Vowels

Glottal	: a,ā
Palatal	: i,ī
Labial	: u,ū
Retroflex	: ṛ,ṝ
Dental	: ḷ
Glottopalatal	: e,ai
Glottolabial	: o,au

Consonants consist of stops, semi-vowels and spirants.

Stops

Guttural	: k, kh, g, gh, ṅ
Palatal	: c, ch, j, jh, ñ
Retroflex	: ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ
Dental	: t, th, d, dh, n
Labial	: p, ph, b, bh, m

Of these the first and the third phonemes in the five series are unaspirated while the second and fourth are aspirated and the fifth is nasalized. Again the first and second phonemes of the five series are unvoiced, while the rest are voiced.

Semi-vowels

Palatal	: y
Labial	: v
Retroflex	: r
Dental	: l

Spirants

Glottal	: h (voiced), ḥ (unvoiced)

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Palatal	: ś (unvoiced)
Retroflex	: ṣ (unvoiced)
Dental	: s (unvoiced)
Pure nasal	: ṃ (*anusvāra*)

Morphological Structure

Sanskrit is a highly inflectional language where nouns, adjectives and pronouns on the one hand, and the finite verbs on the other, undergo formal modifications by the addition of various suffixes. The Sanskrit root is normally monosyllabic consisting of a vowel, alone or with one or two consonants. The root is not fixed but is malleable, with vowel gradations. The 'Stem' is built around a root by various devices such as reduplication of the initial syllable, accent shifts, vowel gradation, suffixation, etc. The roots are the irreducible minimum core arrived at by grammatical analysis. It does not mean, and Indian grammarians did not claim, that they are the earliest forms which later developed into stems and words. It is even probable that some of the stronger stems are the earlier forms and that the reduced root form is the result of accent shifts. The grammatical analysis is resorted to only as a convenient means of description.

Indian grammarians recognized the vowel variations within the same root or the formative elements. The roots are taken in the reduced and irreducible forms; prefixation of *a* to the vowel gave the *guṇa* form (*e,o*) and prefixation of *a* to the *guṇa* form gave the *vṛddhi* form (*ā*, *ai*, *au*). But *a* is its own *guṇa* and is unchanged. *Vṛddhi* and *guṇa* play an important role in the formation of derivatives also. The reduction of *ya*, *va*, *ra*, *la*, to *i*, *u*, *ṛ*, *ḷ* is called *Samprasāraṇa* in Sanskrit grammar. (*yaj*>*iṣṭa*, *vah*>*ūḍha*)

A noun has eight cases (Nominative, Accusative, Instrumental, Dative, Ablative, Genitive, Locative and Vocative) and three numbers (Singular, Dual and Plural). These case-suffixes vary according to the gender (Masculine, Feminine and Neuter; the gender being mostly grammatical and depending on the form and largely independent of import); the suffixes also vary according to the ending of the stem which may be a vowel or a consonant. The pronominal declension is different from the nominal—that of the personal pronouns radically and that of the demonstrative and others in varying degrees. The numerical stem was built on the decimal basis.

The conjugational system of the finite verbs is much more complicated with its ten classes, three voices and a number of tenses and moods. One or more of the many verbal prefixes (*upasargas*) could be used before the root for pointing out subtle shades in the meaning. There are three systems: Present, Aorist and Perfect. Generally speaking in ancient Vedic Sanskrit the present system indicated durative or continuous action, the aorist momentary action and the perfect a state resulting from past action; but such distinctions were lost in Classical Sanskrit. There are four moods: indicative, expressing a fact; injunctive and subjunctive, expressing will and future; optative, expressing a wish; and imperative, expressing a command. Each tense has three numbers and three persons (first person, second person and third person). Each tense could be conjugated with two different sets of terminations, the active (*Parasmaipada*) and the middle (*Ātmanepada*). There are three voices in Sanskrit: the agent-directed (*Kartari*), the goal-directed (*karmaṇi*) and the non-directed impersonal (*bhāve*). The active terminations are used for the first, and the middle terminations for the others. The question as to whether a verbal root is transitive or not is not discussed by Pāṇini; it can be decided by the meaning and usage.

The present system has different types, ten according to Indian grammarians: (1) the stem being the bare root (*asti*); (2) the root with reduplication (*dadāti*); (3) adding—*nā* to the root (*krīṇāti*); (4) infixing *na* in the root (*ruṇaddhi* from *rudh*); (5) by adding *nu* to the root (*aśnoti* from *aś*); (6) adding a thematic vowel *a* to the simple root (*tud a ti*); (7) adding thematic vowel *a* to a guṇated root (*bhavati*, from *bhū*); (8) adding *ya* to the root (*nṛtyati*); (9) by adding *aya* to the root (*corayati*); and (10) by adding *u* to the root (tanoti, tanute).

The future is formed by adding the suffix *sya* to the stem.

The Sandhi rules operated both internally within the elements of a word and externally between the final letter of a word and the initial letter of the next. Two vowels cannot stand together. The Sandhi rules are strict and regular. Some changes like cerebralization (*n* > *ṇa*, *t* > *ṭ*, *s* > *ṣ*) after *r* or *ṣ* could affect not only the immediately following letters but even letters that come after one or more other neutral letters. Internal Sandhi is compulsory, but external Sandhi is optional.

Syntax

In Sanskrit, syntax concordance is compulsory between a noun and the adjective qualifying it, in number, gender and case, hence the adjective behaves just like a noun. Between the subject in the nominative and the finite verb, concordance is compulsory in number and person. The order of words does not normally affect the meaning since the syntactic elements indicating the relationship of the various things to the action contained in the verb are indicated by the case-suffixes themselves. The goal is indicated by the accusative, the immediate instrument of action by the instrumental, the subject (in the active voice) by the nominative, the location of action by the locative, and the point from which the action takes place by the ablative. The genitive case indicates the relation between two nouns, and is the possessive case.

Four main classes of compounds were recognized by Indian grammarians: *Tatpuruṣa* (with a special subdivision

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Karmadhāraya), *Bahuvrīhi*, *Dvandva* and *Avyayībhāva*, the first two inherited from Indo-European and the next two being Indian developments. The general features of a compound are the loss of the inflectional ending of the first member, the uniting of the two elements under one accent and a special meaning for the whole compound.

The Historical Development

The historical development of the Indo-Aryan, or Sanskrit language may be traced in three different stages called Old-Indo-Aryan, Middle Indo-Aryan and Modern Indo-Aryan.

Old Indo-Aryan (from 2000 B.C.). The *Ṛgveda*, a collection of over 1000 hymns is the oldest portion of the Vedic literature and it is the most important for the linguists. The classical language as fixed by Panini and used in the Epic and literary compositions is a later form of the language found in the Vedic text.

Some of the main trends in the evolution of Sanskrit within the Pāṇinian system are the following:

(i) Compounds of two words, generally with a specialized meaning, are found in Vedic Sanskrit; later Classical Sanskrit uses long compounds, compounds containing several members and without any special added significance, sometimes even against Pāṇini's rules (e.g. *jagatsraṣṭā*).

(ii) The verbal system was greatly simplified in later Classical Sanskrit. The subjunctive mood was completely given up and the injunctive became rare. The aorist and perfect remained only in the indicative past. The infinitives, very rich in Vedic, were reduced to one that ending in *-tum*. The present system became predominant.

(iii) Participles began to be used more frequently and often tended to replace the finite verbs. The past passive participle (adding *ta* or *na* to the simple root) could replace the imperfect verb in the passive and the past active participle (adding *-tavat*, *kṛtavant*) could be used in the active. Potential or future passive participle (adding *-ya*, *-tavya*, *-anīya* to the root) also began to increase. Similarly the present participles (*-ant* or *-at* in the case of *Parasmaipada* roots and *-māna* or *-āna* in the case of *Ātmanepada* roots). The indeclinable past participle (adding *-tvā* to the simple root and *-ya* to the root with prefixes) could be used to indicate the former of two actions performed by the same agent.

(iv) Loss of accent. The distinctions based on accents, though still taught in the grammatical texts, ceased to be taken into consideration by writers.

(v) Indiscriminate use of the imperfect, perfect and aorist to indicate the past sense.

(vi) In the later Navyanyāya school, the verb was almost completely given up.

Middle Indo-Aryan (500 B.C.–A.D 1000). The Middle Indo-Aryan comprises Pāli and Prākrits. Pāli and Prākrits have a common characteristic of dropping out some of the vowels and assimilation of conjunct consonants of Sanskrit. But Pāli inflexion has not lost as much of wealth of form as Prākrits have. All the works of the Southern Buddhism are composed in Pāli.

The Prākrits are natural and the local development of the Vedic language coexisted with Classical Sanskrit. Māhārāṣṭrī (Southern), Śauraseni (Middle), Māgadhī (Eastern) and Paiśācī (Northern) are the classical Prākrits. One more Prākrit of great importance is the Ardhamāghadhī, which shows features of both Māgadhi and Śauraseni.

The Prākrits are chiefly known from Sanskrit dramas in which women and the men of lower rank spoke. The Māhārāṣṭrī contains a rich literature including the *Setubandha* and the *Gāthā-saptaśatī*. The prose in the *Karpūramañjari* is the Śauraseni throughout. The Ardhamāgadhī is the language of the sacred canon of the Jains.

Modern Indo-Aryan (from A.D. 1000). Each of the literary Prakrits evolved colloqual dialects called Apabhramsas. The modern vernaculars of North India which are conventionally grouped under Modern Indo-Aryan, are derived from the Apabhramsas. For example, Marāṭhī is derived from the Māhārāṣṭrī Apabhramsa.

Although Pāṇini and his school determined once and for all what should be correct Sanskrit, the grammatical activities of succeeding generations of scholars were towards accounting for the deviations from Pāṇini's norm by interpreting rules in ingenious ways. This shows that Sanskrit had a long story of evolution even as a literary medium.

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Sindhi

POPATI R. HIRANANDANI

The word 'Sindhi' is an adjectival form of 'Sindh', i.e. the language of the province of Sindh, now in Pakistan. After the migration of Sindhi-speaking Hindus following the partition of India in 1947, Sindhi continues to be spoken and written in different states of the Indian Union, especially in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and in the Union Territory of Delhi. It is spoken by more than seven million people (both in Pakistan, India and elsewhere).

Linguistically, Sindhi is bound on the west by the Baloci (Balochi) language, belonging to the Iranian group. To the north, are found the languages of the Lahnda group, with which it is closely connected. To the east is the Marvari dialect of Rajasthani and in the south and south-east are the various dialects of Gujarati.

Origin and Development

Scholars have differed so widely on the origin and ancestry of the Sindhi language that it is difficult to express a definite opinion about it. These are some of the various views scholars, both foreign and Indian, have expressed:

(i) 'The Sindhi is a pure Sanskritical language more free from foreign elements than any other of the North Indian vernaculars' (Trumpp).[1]

This view is also held by Mirza Qalich Beg,[2] H. M. Gurbakshani,[3] Bherumal Mahercand[4] and others who suggest that Sindhi has descended from the Vracada Apabhramsa form of Prakrit.

(ii) 'The ancient language of Sindh was most probably some language belonging to Semitic group.' And again: 'Sindhi language is not directly from Sanskrit but rather it belongs to the ancient language of the Indus Valley prior to the period of Sanskrit. Lahnda (Siraiki, Bahavalpuri, Multani, Derevali, Hindco), Kashmiri and Dardic languages of the Indus Valley are its sisters. . . especially in the early language of Sindh there are elements of languages of the Sumerian and Babylonian civilizations as well as of Semitic languages (Baloch).[5]

(iii) 'Sanskrit is born of Sindh, if not directly, at least indirectly (Seraj).[6]

(iv) 'Sindhi language is a non-Aryan language whose roots must be found in the ancient Mohenjo-Daro civilization. It is the same old language of Mohenjo-Daro by name Saindhava, Saindhvi, Sindvi which came to be called Sindhi' (Allana).[7]

The words of the tongue in which the Rigveda hymns were first composed and sung, by the Aryans, can be noticed in Sindhi but there are forms and words which also denote a pre-Vedic period. The Sindhi vocabulary is nearer to the Vedic language than Sanskrit. Here are some examples:

Sindhi	*Vedic Sanskrit*	*Classical Sanskrit*	*Meaning*
Minhu	Meha	Megha	Rain
Jhuru	Jhureha	Jiran	Old
Jangha	Jangha	Jangha	Leg
Jaru Tharu	Jara Thara	Jala Sthala	Water Land

The Dominant View. To solve the question of the ancestry of Sindhi, the deciphering of the Indus Valley script is of utmost importance. During the last ten years or so, the Finnish scholar Parpola and the Russian Prof. Knorozov haveattempted to decipher the Mohenjo-Daro seals by using computers. Their findings show that the script is Proto-Dravidian. However, S.R. Rao, the noted Indian archaeologist, who claims to have made a break through in decoding the signs on the seals, is of the view that 'the Indus language is an earlier form of the old Indo-Aryan (Rigvedic) language and does not belong to Dravidian family' (*Times of India*, 5 September 1980).

Whether the ancient language of Sindh, current during the Mohenjo-Daro civilization, is the parent of modern Sindhi or not, and whether it belongs to the Semitic or the Dravidian family, are matters of dispute. Most of the scholars of Sindhi language (Nabi Baksh Baloch, Dr. G. A. Allana, Seraj Al Huq) are of the view that Sindhi belongs to the ancient language of the Indus Valley prior to the period of Sanskrit. Its connections with the sister languages of the Indo-Aryan family have yet to be worked out scientifically.

Peculiarities

In the words of George Stack '. . . the Sindhi will to the philologist prove a more interesting study than that of many of the other Indian dialects. The habit of affixing signs to words in lieu of the pronouns and the prepositions governing them, the regular form of the Passive Voice, the use of Impersonals, the reduplicated casual words and other

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points which the learner will mark as he proceeds, give to it beauties distinct from most Indian tongues.'[8]

Sindhi has six main dialects. They are prevalent in different areas in Sind and its surrounding territories, and are:

(i) Sireli (from 'Siro' meaning 'upstream'), which is spoken in upper Sindh. As the area touches Multan in the north, there is some similarity in structure with Multani. It differs from other dialects in the use of pronominal suffixes. The pitch and musical accent is predominant in this dialect.

(ii) Vicholi (Vicholi from 'vic', i.e. centre), which is spoken in the Vicholo, the mid-region, and is taken to be the standard dialect employed in literature and used by the educated class.

(iii) Lari I (from Lar, meaning 'sloping ground'), which is in use in the delta of the Indus. According to Grierson, 'Natives look upon it as rude and uncouth.... but it is not without interest to the philologist, as it retains certain prominent Dardic peculiarities that have been lost by Vicholi.[9]

(iv) Trareli (from Thar....Thal....Sthal, i.e. 'desert') which is spoken in the Thar, the desert in the eastern part of Sindh, separating it from Marvar in Rajasthan. It is also called Thareci and its variant is known as Dhatki.

(v) Lasi which is the dialect spoken in the Las Bela, in Baluchistan.

(vi) Kachi (or Kachki) which is spoken in Kutch and Kathiavar in Gujarat. This dialect is influenced by the Gujarati and Rajasthani languages.

Vocabulary

Sindhi vocabulary consists of four categories of words:

(i) Tatsama or Semi-Tatsama, i.e. words that are the same as Sanskrit, borrowed in ancient times or taken recently.

(ii) Tadbhava, i.e. Sanskrit words in a derived form. Sindhi is replete with Tadbhava words, but some of them are so changed that they appear as pure Sindhi words.

(iii) Deshi, i.e. words that existed before the entry of Aryans in the region or, perhaps, even after it. They are not taken from Sanskrit, but may have been borrowed from other sources that are native. There are a good number of words from the Dravidian languages because Sindh has had trade relations with the Malabar coast in the past.[10]

(iv) Videshi, i.e. words of foreign origin. Sindhi has borrowed extensively from Arabic and Persian after the conquest of Sindh by the Arabs in 711. Borrowing from both Arabic as well as Persian has been going on unabated ever since. Sindhi has borrowed prefixes, suffixes, nouns, verbal nouns, adjectives, adverbs, etc. from these languages. After the British conquered Sindh in 1843, Sindhi has been enriched by English as well as other European languages right up to the present day.

On the whole, Sindhi is rich in vocabulary and is becoming richer with the addition of more words and expressions. It has a substantial number of proverbs and idioms. There is a good possibility that many more words will be added to it from various Indian languages as Sindhi-speaking Hindus are spread throughout India.

Phonology, Morphology and Syntax

The Sindhi system corresponds, in general, to that of the Indo-Aryan. It, however, shares one peculiarity with Kashmiri, viz. instead of a single consonant, it has the consonant plus a voiceless vowel, e.g. cokaru: 'boy'.

Another feature is the series of 'recursive' consonants which are pronounced by drawing in the breath, with the larynx lowered and the glottis closed. Another typical feature is the occurrence of cerebrals where dentals are found in other Indo-Aryan languages.

Sindhi has two genders, masculine and feminine, and two numbers, singular and plural. Case relationship is shown by means of prepositions added to the oblique forms. An adjective agrees in gender, number and case with its noun. Sindhi uses pronominal suffixes attached, as in Lahnda, to nouns as well as participal forms, which in Kashmiri are used only with verbs.

The Sindhi verb has two conjugations, intransitive and transitive. Compound tenses consist of combinations of participles plus auxiliary.

The Script

According to Al Biruni (973–1048), the alphabet used in southern Sindh, towards the seacoast, was Malvari, while in other parts the Ardhanagari script was in vogue.[11] Unfortunately Al Biruni has not provided any idea about the Malvari script. Later transformation from the native script to Arabic script must have been gradual.

Another script called Caliha Akhri (of 40 letters) or Khwajaki Suratkhati introduced by the Ismaili missionary Pir Sadrud Din, is referred to by Allana in his Sindhi Suratkhati.[12] According to him it was used by Ismaili Muslim converts during the latter half of Sumra Rule (1051–1352). Besides consonants it has eight graphemes but does not possess diphthongs. The script is based on Devnagari characters. There exist books in this script on literature, history, religion, and philosophy. They are preserved in manuscript form in the India Office and British Museum Libraries, London.

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The credit for introducing an improvised Arabic Sindhi script, which continued for more than 150 years, goes to Abul Hasan (17th century) who used it for the first time in his *Muqadama al-Salvat* (Introduction to Prayers). The book was written in A.D. 1700.

Devnagari script too was used by the Hindus, especially the Brahmins. Likewise, Gurumukhi script formed by the Sikh Guru Angad between 1538 and 1552, was freely used by Sindhi Hindu women. A script called Hatai or Hatvanki has also been used for a long time by Hindus for book-keeping.

Perso-Arabic Script. When the British took over Sindh in 1843, they appointed a committee to go into the question of providing one standard script for Sindhi. The new Perso-Arabic script was approved in 1853 and, since then, thousands of Sindhi books have been published in that script. Although there was opposition to this script by the minority community in Sindh, the new script found favour with the generality. It is however, interesting to note that some European scholars did not favour this script and brought out English-Sindhi and Sindhi-English dictionaries in the Devnagari script (Bombay, 1849, 1855). These dictionaries were prepared by Captain Stack with the help of two Pandits from Hyderabad. Trumpp brought out Sindhi Pathavali in both Devanagari and Perso-Arabic scripts in 1858. Quite a few books in Devanagari script have been published in India after Partition but the number of books printed in Perso-Arabic script is considerably more.

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Tamil

S. V. SHANMUGAM

Introduction

Tamil, one of the major Dravidian languages, has a long literary tradition. It is spoken mainly in the southern-most part of India, called Tamilnadu, a state with a population of over 40 million. Tamil-speaking populations are found in almost all the states of India, as well as in Sri Lanka, where Tamil is the second major language, in Singapore and Malaysia, where Tamil is used in education, the mass media and as a literary medium, and in Indonesia, especially in Sumatra, Mauritius, South Africa and Fiji.

The origin and etymology of the word *Tamiḷ* are not clear.

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Though the Sanskrit word *Drāvida* and the Dravidian word *Tamiḻ* are intimately connected, further research is necessary to establish that the original word is Tamil.

Tamil has the oldest written document not only among the Dravidian language but also among the modern Indo-Aryan languages. The earliest written documents are in the form of two or three short cave inscriptions each appearing predominantly in the Madurai and Ramanathapuram districts and sparingly in other commercially and culturally important places like Erode and Karur. According to Iravadam Mahadevan, the earliest Tamil inscriptions belong to the period 3rd century B.C. to 1st century A.D.

Pre-History

The development of Tamil as a language independent from other genetically related languages such as Kannada and Telugu is a part of the pre-history of the language. Tamil belongs to the southern group of the Dravidian languages which have three major sub-groups, viz. the Southern, Central and Northern groups. The Southern group is distinguished linguistically by the loss of the initial **c* in many words (Burrow, 1971). For example, the Proto-Dravidian word **cayntu* 'five' is realized as *ayntu* and its related forms in most of the Southern group of languages which include Malayalam, Kota, Toda, Kodagu, Kannada and Tulu. Another special feature of this group is the development of the feminine singular as a separate category in the demonstrative pronoun (*avaḷ*—'she') and in the finite verb (*vantāḷ* —'she came').

Among the South Dravidian languages, Tamil is closely related to Malayalam. But the type of relationship is a point of scholarly dispute. The comparative Dravidianists, like L. V. Ramaswamy Aiyar, T. Burrow and M. B. Emeneau are of the opinion that Malayalam might have separated from Early Middle Tamil. However, L. V. Ramaswamy Aiyar has shown the existence of certain archaic forms of the west-coast dialect (Malayalam). Attoor Krishna Pisharadi (1875–1964), Ulloor Parameswara Iyer (1877–1949) and K. Goda Varma (1902–52) hold that Malayalam separated from Proto-Dravidian and not from Tamil. Recent researches (see especially Govindan Kutty, 1972; Shanmugam, 1976) have brought out a few more archaic features of the Malayalam language and the common innovations between Tamil and Malayalam in the historic period. Hence the relationship cannot be explained by the tree diagram.

Some of the features which distinguish Tamil from the other South Dravidian languages, including Malayalam, are as follows:

(i) The change of *i*>*u* especially in the second person pronoun oblique form **nim*>*num* (your) in Tamil

(ii) The dentalization of the initial palatal nasal, i.e. *ñ*>*n*, e.g. **ñāṇal* (a reed) >*nāṇal* in Tamil

(iii) The loss of the Proto-Dravidian masculine suffix—**kkan* in Tamil: **mutukkan*>*mutuvan/mutiyan* (old people) **kit'ukkan*>*cit'uvan'* (boy, young person), etc.

Special Features

Phonologically, Old Tamil has twelve vowels out of which two (*ai* and *au*) are diphthongs, five (*a*, *i*, *u*, *e* and *o*) are short vowels and the rest are their corresponding long vowels. There are eighteen consonants, six stops (*p*, *t*, *ṭ*, *t'*, *c*, *k*), six homorganic nasals (*ṅ*, *ñ*, *ṇ*, *n'*, *n*, and *m*), two semi-vowels (*y*,*v*) and four laterals and flaps (*l*, *ḷ*, *ḻ* and *r*).

Vowel clusters of the long vowels and their corresponding short vowels are abundant in Old Tamil texts. No consonant cluster is allowed either in the initial position or in the final position. Except *r* and *ḻ*, all other consonants can occur in gemination and except *k*, *c*, *t* and *p* all others can occur in combination of two different consonants.

From the morphological point of view, Tamil maintains its suffix agglutinative character, i.e. morphemes in a word are glued together with the root as the first member and the modifiers as the second or third member. The nouns are grouped into human and non-human; the human nouns are further divided into singular and plural number, the singular alone having the masculine and the feminine gender distinction. The non-human nouns are classified into singular and plural only. The fivefold system is significant syntactically since the finite verbs have the same pronominal reference as the gender number of the subject.

Tamil has two major types of sentences: one being noun plus noun (*avan' māṇavan'* —'he (is a) student') and the other being noun plus verb (*avan' vantān'*—'he came'). The use of the interrogative pronoun as the relative pronoun is not common but the relative participle form (i.e. verb root+tense+relative participle suffix) and the noun (e.g. *vanta paiyan*—the boy who came', '*vanta*' being the relative participle) is quite common.

Lexically, Tamil has a vast and rich vocabulary of native words. Borrowings as loan words (i.e. *Tatsama* or *Tadbhava* forms) are less common but the concept is expressed by internal creations (*pukaivaṇṭi*—'smoke cart'—for train) and loan extensions (i.e. extending the meaning of the existing word, e.g. *uyir*— 'soul'—for 'vowel'. In addition to these, there has been in the 19th and 20th centuries a substantial influx of loan words from English also.

Tamil Script and Its Evolution

The creation of a writing system of its own and the establishment of a standard spelling system and grammar are evidence of the development of a language as a literary medium. So, the adaptation of the number of graphemes, the spelling system etc., are of paramount importance in the study of the evolution of a language.

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On the basis of the available written specimens of Tamil and the statement of *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest extant grammatical work during the early centuries of the Christian era, the adaptation of the Brahmi script to suit the genius of the Tamil language seems to be clear. For instance, the short vowels *e* and *o* are represented with a diacritical mark, i.e. a dot on the corresponding long vowels. The syllabic letters of the vowel /*a*/ series (*ka, ca*), which are combinations of a consonant and a vowel, have a single grapheme, while the pure consonant, which is phonemically single, is represented by two graphemes (a dot above the syllabic letter of /*a*/ series). The special feature of Tamil writing is the full use of a dot to represent the pure consonant everywhere that is either intervocally or in the consonant cluster. Hence the avoidance of ligatures.

The number of graphemes is not constant in the inscriptional writing, but is uniform in the literary works. However, one evolutionary aspect in the literary language should be noted. Twelve vowels, eighteen consonants and the symbol called 'āytam' are found employed upto the 7th century. In *Tirumantiram*, one of the twelve Saiva books and the first of the *siddhar* (realized soul) works, we come across the scripts *s, ṣ, kṣ* to denote the sounds only. The graphemes *s, ṣ, j, h, kṣ* and *śri* are for the first time found in Arunagiri Nather's *Tiruppukaḷ* (15th century). They became more common during the later period in poetic literature as well as in prose works. In spite of the purist movement, modern creative writers as well as writers in other fields are now using four graphemes, *s, ṣ, j* and *h*, quite commonly, with only certain restrictions and new conventions (Shanmugam 1978).

Regional Dialects

There are four regional dialect areas within Tamilnadu. They are: (1) the Southern dialect, comprising the speech of the Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari districts; (2) the Central dialect comprising the speech of Thanjavur, Thiruchirappalli and parts of South Arcot district; (3) the Northern dialect comprising the speech of part of South Arcot, North Arcot and Chingleput districts; and (4) the Western dialects comprising the dialect of Coimbatore, Periar, Salem, Dharmapuri and Nilgiri district. They also coincide with the ancient division of the country, viz. the Pandya Nadu, the Chola Nadu, the Tondai Nadu and the Kongu Nadu respectively. Outside India, Sri Lanka Tamil is another major dialect from the colloquial language point of view.

Literary Dialects and Linguistic Features

The oldest literary writings are known as the Sangham (caṅgam) classics. Sangham means 'academy'. All these works are anthologies of poems on love and war, composed by different poets. The Sangham texts mainly include *eṭṭuttokai*—'eight anthologies'—and *pattuppāṭṭu*—ten 'idylls.' They are considered heroic poetry by some scholars. The Sangham poems portray the problems of life—especially of family life—and the socio-political conditions, in a simple metrical form called *āciriyam*. The languge of the Sangham poems is considered, from the historical point of view, to be Old Tamil.

Linguistically, there seems to be more free varying forms in the Sangham texts, e.g. *viraii—virāay—viravi*—'having mixed'. However, there are certain general features which distinguish the Sangham poems from the later day poems. For instance, the addition of *-kaḷ* as the plural suffix in the human nouns was very rare. In the so-called strong verbs, which take the additional stop in the infinitives, /p/ is more frequent in the Sangham texts (*naṭa*-'walk'; *naṭappa*—'to walk'). So too the occurrence of the conditional verbal participle of the pattern *ceyin*—'if did', e.g. the verbal base plus *in*' is very high compared to the other pattern, *ceytāl*, i.e. the verbal base+past tense+*āl*. Lexically, the occurrence of *niyir* or *nīr* as the second person plural pronoun, and the two way contrast, viz. past and non-past in the tense system, are some of the special features of the Sangham texts.

Four or five dialects could be recognised in the Sangham texts. The standard literary dialect in the Sangham age is considered to be the dialect of Madurai, the capital of the Pandya Kingdom. There is a popular belief that Madurai was the seat of the Tamil Sangham. Moreover, there is much internal evidence associating Madurai with literary activity and also the Pandyas with Tamil. Therefore it cannot be far from the truth to assume that the Pandya dialect or the Southern dialect was the standard literary dialect during the Sangham age, which falls roughly between 300 B. C. and A.D. 300.

The ethical poem *Tirukkuṛaḷ* and the epics, *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai*, are considered post-Sangham works. Their language also reflects certain changes and is somewhat nearer to modern Tamil than to the language of the Sangham texts.

There was a dark period in the political history of Tamilnadu between the 4th and 6th centuries. The theme of the Sangham poems was then written in the *veṇpā* metre in works such as *Aintiṇaiaimpatu, Kārnāṛpatu* and *Kaḷavaḷinaṛpatu*. Many ethical works were composed by Jain scholars. The beginning of the 7th century saw the rise of the Pallava kingdom with Kanchipuram as its capital. Tamil literature for the next three centuries comprises of soul-searching Bhakti poems or devotional songs. The Saiva and Vaishnava saints composed many of these poems, which are considered, from the linguistic point of view, the Early Middle Tamil texts.

The Early Middle Tamil texts, naturally, inherited many features from Old Tamil but with certain innovations.

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Besides, certain forms which are considered historically older than the forms of Old Tamil are also attested to for the first time. For instance, the new forms for the second person plural pronouns are *nīṅkaḷ* in Appar's *Tēvāram* and *nīm* in *Jīvaka cintāmaṇi*. Similarly, the form *uyir*—'soul' —found in Old Tamil is now attested as *ucir* in *Tēvāram*. Here the intervocal *-c-* is considered to be older than *-y-* (Caldwell, 1875:153). Many native words with the initial *c-* are recorded for the first time in the Bhakti literature.

Another notable feature of the Middle Tamil is the change of the frequency of some of the forms. As already noted, in the infinitives (*naṭa-pp-a*—to walk) and in the conditional (*naṭa-pp-in*—'if walked'), the strong verbs had *-pp-* more frequently than *-kk-* forms in the Old Tamil whereas in the Middle Tamil, *-kk-* forms are more frequent (*naṭakka*, *naṭakkin*). Similarly, in the conditional participles *ceyin* and *ceytāl* pattern, the former is more frequent in old Tamil while the latter is more frequent in Middle Tamil.

All this may be due to the change of the dialect basis of the standard language. Since many Saiva saints are from the Central region, i.e. Chola country, it is thought that the standard dialect during this period might have been the dialect of the Chola region.

The middle part of the Middle Tamil period saw only philosophical works and commentaries of earlier literary and grammatical works being written. A greater influence of Sanskrit was felt in the language now. The literary language became pedantic during this period. The *Maṇipravāḷa* style, i.e. the mixture of Sanskrit and Tamil, predominated. This period was roughly between the 10th and the 15th centuries.

The later part of the Middle Tamil period (from the 16th to the 19th century) was the period of certain Tamil musical and dramatical works in poetry. They are called *Paḷḷu*, *Kuṟavañci*, *Noṇḍināṭakam*, etc. Even though they were not taken seriously by students of literature in an earlier period, their importance is now being increasingly recognised. Linguistically, they are significant because the colloquial speech of the time and the so-called low class dialects were used in these literary works. Many loan words from other Dravidian languages (especially from Kannada and Telugu)—due to the Vijayanagar empire—as well as other Indo-Aryan languages like Urdu, Arabic, Persian and Marathi, were also introduced into the Tamil language.

Western influences have made prose a literary medium today. The novel and the short story are the new forms of literature that have been introduced during this period and they reflect clearly the socio-cultural and political changes. At the beginning of the modern period, a controversy was raised about the type of the language used in the prose writings. Some writers like V. Ramaswamy Aiyangar (Rāmasvāmi Ayyaṅkār, 1889–1951), popularly known as Va. Rā., favoured the use of the colloquial language. But the language scholars supported the classical language. However, T. V. Kalyanasundara Mudaliar (Kalyāṇasundara Mutaliyār, 1883–1953), popularly called 'Tiru Vi. Ka.', used a simple language that is neither colloquial nor classical in his political and social writings. In this connection, the observation of M. Varadarajan should be noted: 'Generally great writers like Tiru Vi. Ka., Subramanya Bharati and others rendered yeoman service in moulding the modern literary Tamil on the syntax of the spoken Tamil as the media of mass communication' (Varadarajan, 1962, p. 84).

As in other languages, the development of the novel and the short story as new literary genres is responsible for the introduction of spoken varieties, particularly in the dialogue part of the stories. This has resulted in the use of social and regional dialectal features in the written language. However, owing to the increasing popularity of the press and the radio, an effective standardization of the Tamil language is in progress.

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Telugu

B. RADHAKRISHNA

Names of the Language

Telugus, otherwise called *Āndhras*, are referred to for the first time in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (600 B.C.). The word *Āndhra* occurs as the name of a mixed race. Hunting tribes called *andhas/andh(r)akas* were known to early Sanskrit writers. The Ramayana calls the kingdom of the people *Āndhradēśa*, *Āndhrāpatha*, *Āndhramaṇḍala* and so on. Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (2nd century) mentions that Andhra was a *vibhāṣā*. But the word clearly denoted the language of the race only from the 11th century.

Tamil literature of the Sangham period has references to Telugu as *Waḍagu/waḍuga*—'northern'. Telugu has variants *tenūgu/tenungu* and *telūgu/telungu* occurring in literature from the 11th century, the -n- forms being earlier. *ten*—'south'—still occurs in many compounds. *Vāyupurāṇa* (7th century) mentions *Tilinga* as the name of a township. The word *tenugu* was derived by a few from the Sanskrit *trinaga*—'three hills'—and *telugu* from *trilinga*—'three phalluses'—but these are efforts at Sanskritisation. The final element *-gu* (<*ku) can be compared with the same in *waḍagu*, *koḍagu*, etc. The Portuguese called the people Gentio (jentiyō) and their language Gentoo (jentū). All these words are synonymous. *Telingās/ Telangīs* still living in Nepal, in south-eastern parts of India and in Burma are probably of the same stock. The first regular Indian troops raised by the British were called *telangas*.

Population

Āndhras/Telugus, considered a mixed race by *Manusmṛiti* (c. 200 B.C.) and similar works, are non-Aryans who withdrew southwards. Over 37 million Telugus live in Andhra Pradesh and about 8 millions more live in other parts of India—mainly in Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh. Around 150,000 of them are domiciled in Malaysia, 100,000 in South Africa, 50,000 each in Mauritius and Fiji, 17,000 in Burma and substantial numbers in the USA, the UK, Sri Lanka and other countries. They are the most populous among the speakers of Dravidian languages.

Genetic Relationship

Structurally, Telugu is one of the principal Dravidian languages and is an offshoot of the Central Dravidian subfamily, having an intimate genetic relationship with the Kui-Kuvi-Koṇḍa subgroup. It has close geographical contact with the South Dravidian subfamily from a very remote past. On a lexico-statistical study, it can be assumed that it branched off from the Central Dravidian as a separate language some time between the 9th and 12th centuries B.C. On comparative evidence, and as a daughter of proto-Dravidian, it is not autochthonous in India. Dravidian affinity with Ural-Altaic subsumed under the Scythian or south-Turanian family of the 19th century, is probably not earlier than the second millennium B.C. But that was a pre-historic relationship.

Antiquity

The first evidence of the language is found in a one-word rock edict, that was discovered at Amaravati in the Guntur (guṇṭūr) district, and which is datable to 200 B.C. The Prakrit anthology *Sattāsai* (lit. seven hundered stanzas), compiled by the Sātavāhana King Hala (1st century A.D.), Kumārilabhaṭṭa's *Tantra vārtikam* (7th century) and several Sanskrit and Prakrit inscriptions contain place-names, personal names and short phrases in Telugu. The earliest inscription with Telugu sentences, found at Erragudipadu (erraguḍipāḍu) village in the Kamalapuram taluk of Cuddapah (kaḍapa) district, is datable to A.D. 575. Metrically composed Telugu inscriptions and those with ornamental or literary prose appear from A.D. 630 clearly indicating that the literary dialect was moving away from the colloquial one from then onwards. The language shows, from its earliest known period, considerable Sanskrit influence both in diction and in phrase structure. The first great literary work, Nanaya's *Śrimad Āndhra Mahābhāratamu* (11th century), beginning with an invocation in Sanskrit, testifies to the intimate cultural borrowing.

Script

The earlier-mentioned Amaravati inscription is in the *Bhaṭṭiprōlu* variety of the *Brāhmī* script that branched off during the 5th century B.C. from the main stock. Its use ended probably around the end of the 4th century, giving birth to the *Vēṅgi Cāḷukya* script (popularly known as Telugu-Kannada 'box-heads'). This script passed through three stages, of which the last was called the Transitional one by Burnell and the Old Telugu-Kannada script by J. F. Fleet, the two scholars who edited and published a host of inscriptions in both the languages. It is generally believed

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that the two syllabaries got separated from 1300 but Al Biruni could notice the divergence from as early as 1030.

The characters of the *Vēṅgi Cāḷukya* script were always engraved from bottom to top. The Telugu syllabary has undergone some changes but the idea of script reform is very recent. Some have suggested a common script once again for Telugu and Kannada and some others want to modify only the Telugu script to increase efficiency and economy in typing and printing. But the whole question is still in the melting pot.

Sound System and Dialects

The phonemic inventory for modern Telugu, inclusive of the coexistent system, is 33 consonants and 11 vowels:

/k, kh, g, gh, c, ch, j, jh, ṭ, ṭh, ḍ, ḍh, ṇ, t, th, d, dh, n, p, ph, f, b, bh, m, y, r, l, ḷ, v, ś, ṣ, s, h/ and /a, ā, i, ī, āe, u, ū, e, ē, o, ō/. The aspirates /f, s, ṣ, and h/ are non-native. In the course of history, **r*, and **l* have lost their phonemic status and /æ/ and /f/ have gained it. The syllabary has a few more graphs which are difficult to represent here, e.g. ŋ, ñ, ʦ, dʒ, kṣ, jñ and ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, ḹ, ai, au. The inventory changes from dialect to dialect.

Broadly speaking, there are four regional dialects within Andhra Pradesh: (i) *Kaḷiṅga*, (ii) *Kōstā*, (iii) *Telaṅgāṇā* and (iv) *Rāyalasīma*. The first comprises the three northern-most districts (Srikakulam, Vijayanagaram and Vishakhapatnam), the second, the remaining coastal districts (East and West Godavaris, Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore), the third, the Telugu districts of the erstwhile Nizam State (Adilabad, Medak, Nizamabad, Karimnagar, Warangal, Khammam, Nalgonda, Rangareddi, Hyderabad and Mahaboobnagar) and the last the four ceded districts (Kurnool, Cuddappah, Anantpur and Chittoor). Border areas of these regions display transitional zones with the features of one dialect overlapping those of others. For instance, forms with and without /æ/ and /ḷ/ occur in the districts of Khammam, Nellore, etc. sometimes reflecting coastalisms and sometimes not. /æ/ ṇ/, and /ḷ/ are phonemic only in the first two regions. /ś/ and /ṣ/ are indistinct in Telangana whereas /ś/ and /ṣ/ are not so in other regions. Aspiration, ambivalent even in educated speech, is symptomatic of hypercorrection or stress in uneducated speech. Formal and informal styles exist, the former mostly in pedantic expressions and in textbooks. Class dialects, such as *waḍarī* and *kāmāṭhī*, occur in Maharastra, *Bērāḍi* and *Sālewārī* in Madhya Pradesh and several others within the State and elsewhere.

Modernity

Telugu was declared the official language of Andhra Pradesh in 1966 and the medium of instruction at the university level from 1968. This naturally increased it functional load. Scientific and other terminology is extensively borrowed from, and through, English while coining, though limited, is based on Sanskrit. The variety of Telugu employed in modern scientific and literary activities is an elevated form of the coastal dialect with assimilated and unassimilated English borrowings gaining ascendancy over the Perso-Arabic terms prevalent at the lower levels of administration. The spread of education and massmedia for learning and entertainment are levelling the dialectalisms; and the coastal variety, with certain modifications, has become the Modern Standard Telugu (MST).

Special Characteristics

Telugu is an SOV (Subject-Object-Verb) language. Hybridisation is more common in functional registers and colloquial varieties. Passive and relative constructions, borrowed from Indo-Aryan, are relatively infrequent in idiomatic expressions. Noun predication is very common as in *Rāmuḍu oka bāluḍu*—'Rama (is) a boy'—without the copula 'is'. There is only a middle voice and a reported speech with *ani* past participle of *anu*—'to say'—appended to a statement (rather than a distinction between direct and indirect speeches). To illustrate, *Rāmuḍu nēn oka bāluḍan* (*ani*) *annāḍu*— 'Rama reported that he was a boy'—instead of **Rāmuḍu 'nēn oka bāluḍanu' annāḍu*—'Rama said, I am a boy'—or *Rāmuḍu nēn oka bāluḍan annāḍu*— 'Rama said *that he was* a boy'.

A radical long vowel obtains only in the first syllable and germinates do not occur following a long vowel except in kinship terms such as *bāmma*—'granny'. /ṇ, ḷ, y/ do not occur word-initially; /ṭ/ occurs but rarely. An initial /v/ is invariably followed by non-palatal vowels. Geminates never, and conjunct consonants only in non-native elements, occur initially. Nasals preceding stops are generally homorganic. Only /y/ and /v/ occur word-finally. The second and third vowels occurring in trisyllabic words are either only palatals (as in *celimi*—'friendship') or non-palatals (as in *batuku*—livelihood). Either voiced stops (as in *atuku*—'joint') or unvoiced ones (as in *podugu*—'udder') can only occur in second and third syllables of a trisyllabic word.

Prognosis

Telugu is a borrowing language. In about two millennia of its known history, the language has shown a tremendous ability to absorb from any source language whatever is needed. The prognosis is that the modern educated speech of the coastal region will continue to be the medium of instruction, administration and literature.

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Urdu

NASEER AHMAD KHAN

Origin

The word 'Urdu' is derived from the Turkish word 'ordu' which is the root of the English word 'Horde' meaning army or crowd. This name has come into use after 1750. Before and after this adoption, Urdu was also called Hindvi, Rekhtah, Urdu-e-Mo'alla, Hindustani, etc. (Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Indo-Aryan and Hindi*, p. 197). It is one of the major Indo-Aryan languages born and bred in India as a result of the cultural synthesis which began in the 10th century A.D. due to trade relations, cultural exchanges, migrations and military expeditions. The grammatical structure of Urdu is entirely based on Western Sauraseni Apabhramsa but its vocabulary, idioms and literary traditions drew heavily from Central Asia, Turkey and Persian sources. One reason for this ready conglomeration was that the Aryans started from their original homeland in Central Asia and one group branched off to ancient Iran while another crossed over to North India. Both the groups had common traditions, language and cultural ethos. This explains the commonness of vocabulary between ancient Persian and ancient Sanskrit. Subsequently when these ancient Persian influences remingled with the Sanskrit traditions after the Muslim conquest, Urdu was born out of these age-old resemblances (Mohammad Hasan, *Urdu Sha'eri Ka Tehzibi Aur Fikri Pas Manzar*, Delhi, Idara-i-Tasnīf p. 36).

Formation and Development. The socio-political history of India during the last 1000 years has played a great role in the formation and development of Urdu. After 1206, drastic changes took place in the social, cultural and linguistic structures of the country. These changes served to develop a composite culture and gave birth to a new language. Since this language was given patronage by the ruling elites, it soon began to be used by a large number of the people and gradually became the *lingua franca* of the regions. In course of time, it travelled from the North, the nucleus of Muslim power, to the west from where it moved to the Deccan, embracing eventually the eastern regions as well. Indeed, the numerous *Khānqahs* (monasteries of Muslim saints) could come in close contact with the indigenous people through the same language. Its patronization by the political magnates and the Sufis contributed immensely to the formation and configuration of the language. The first Urdu poet, perhaps, was Mas'ud Sa'd Salman (1046–1121), a Sufi, followed by yet a number of other Sufis, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti (1140–1268), Baba Farid Ganj Shakar (1173–1265), Nizamuddin Aulia (1238–1325), Amir Khusrau (1253–1325) and Khwaja Banda Nawaz Gesū Darāz (1321–1422) of Gulbarga, etc.

During the reign of Allauddin Khilji (1296–1316) and Mohammad Bin Tughlaq (1325–51) the language spread over large parts of Gujarat and southern states of India. The states like Golcanda and Bijapur which enjoyed an autonomous status during the early 14th century, became the centres of Urdu language and valuable literary works were produced by its patron. The language of poetry between the 16th and 17th centuries had a mixture of eastern Punjabi, vernacular of western U. P., Dravidian dialects and Perso-Arabic structural characteristics. The main contributors of Dakkhani Urdu literature are Miranji (1595–1663), Bahauddin Bahan (1388–1506), Khwaja Banda Nawaz Gesu Daraz, Mulla Wajhi (? –1635), Quli Qutub Shah (1565–1611), etc. In North India along with Amīr Khusrau the name of Kabir (1440–1518), Guru Nanak (1419–1538), Afzal (? –1625), Abdul Wasey Hansvi and Khan Aarzu (1687–1755) also played an important role

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in forming and developing the language. Under the influence of Dakkhani writing, perhaps after 17th century, North Indian writers and scholars also started writing in Urdu. Vali Dakkhani's (1649–1707) literary tradition became popular in the north which was followed by eminent writers of Delhi, Lucknow, Patna and Rampur.

Migration of the Speakers

Several migrations of Urdu speakers also were of some significance in this connection. The first important migration took place in 1326 when Mohammad Bin Tughlaq shifted his capital from the North to Daulatabad near Deogiri in South India. Apart from the army, approximately 1400 palanquins of eminent scholars and Sufis with their followers arrived in new capital (Abdul Haq, *Urdu Ki Ibtidāi Naśo Numa Mein Sūfia-i-Karām Ka Kām*, Aurangabad, p. 27). After the decay of the Mughal empire, a considerable number of Urdu speakers left Delhi and its vicinity in two phases: first during the period of Nadir Shah's massacre (1740) and then during the revolt against the British rule in 1857 which scattered the speakers in the northern, eastern and western provinces. During the partition of India between 1947 and 1950, people from U. P., Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bengal crossed over to the newly formed Pakistan and settled down in the West Punjab, Sindh and East Bengal. This process of migration gave Urdu a subcontinental status.

Dialects

Urdu is spoken in different Indo-Aryan and Non-Aryan linguistic environments as its speakers are spread throughout the country in various pockets, large or small. Hence linguistic, regional and social pressures influenced the structure of Urdu and caused to bring out many standard and non-standard dialects of the language. Urdu dialects may be classified into three groups—linguistic, regional and social dialects from which Dakkhani Urdu, Calcutiya Urdu, Bambayya Urdu, Gojri Urdu, Kashmiri Urdu, Punjabi Urdu and Karkhandari Urdu, etc. may specially be listed. (Naseer Ahmad, *Urdu ki Boliyān Aur Karkhandāri Ka Imrāni*—Lisāniyāti Muta'la, Idara-i-Tasnif, Delhi, pp. 29–64). Some of the dialects of Urdu, particularly Dakkhani Urdu have written literature with structural peculiarities.

Relationship with Sister Languages

All modern Indo-Aryan languages may be regarded as sister languages of Urdu, but the languages which originally belonged to western Śaurasēnī Apabhrṁśā like Punjabi, Western Hindi dialects, Avadhi, etc. are more closely related to Urdu and may be termed as its real sisters. Urdu, from its early stage till now, is being spoken in the environments of Sindhi, Gujarati, Bengali, Marathi, Telugu and Kannada languages. Urdu developed its relationship with these languages which cannot certainly be ruled out. As far as Hindi is concerned, it was also derived from Western Śaurasēnī Apabhrṁśā but it was brought up with Braj Bhasha tradition; later on, it joined with the stream of Khaḍiboli tradition. Apart from the socio-linguistic considerations, it is now very difficult to delineate the structural characteristics of Urdu and Hindi separately. Both have more or less the same linguistic structure but are quite different in their literary traditions.

Present Position. Urdu being a language of the masses has varied positions in different parts of the Indian sub-continent. A considerable number of people in Bangla Desh can also speak and understand its vernacular form. Urdu enjoys national status in Pakistan. Though the number of speakers is less than Punjabi and Sindhi, every literate person can understand the language. In India its status is seen in three groups: the first group covers Assam, Orissa, Tamilnadu, Haryana and Punjab where many small pockets of Urdu speakers may be traced: the second group includes West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu & Kashmir. Here a considerable number of people can speak and understand the language. Urdu occupies official status in Jammu & Kashmir. Various districts of West Bengal, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh have also recognized it as a second official language. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan may be listed into a third group where the majority of people can speak and understand the vernacular form and several crores among them claim it as their mother tongue. Urdu has no official status in these states except Bihar although it is recognized as one of the fifteen major languages in Indian constitution. Thus the total Urdu speaking population is estimated at 28 million in India.

Special Features

Urdu has altogether 57 segmental and supra-segmental phonemes. Segmental phonemes are 48 in number among which 37 are consonants, 10 vowels and one semi-vowel. The supra-segmental (phonetic features) phonemes are 9:3 pitches (low, mid, high) 4 terminal contours (level, rising, falling, low-rising) one nasalization and one juncture. The consonants may be grouped into two broad divisions the Stops and the Continuants. All the consonants are purely Indo-Aryan by origin except the uvular stop /q/ and fricatives, i.e. /f,z,ẑ,kh, gh/ which have Perso-Arabic character. Like Hindi all the ten Urdu vowels are simple and pure and permit nasalization in different positions.

Phonotactically speaking, Urdu syllables do not allow

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consonant cluster in word-initial position except a consonant plus a semi-vowel. It cannot also begin or end with long consonant. Five syllables are possible in one simple word. Urdu has certain limitations and restrictions in its vowel phoneme distribution. The vowels /e, o/ freely vary with /ai, au/ respectively, in final word positions. The /ḍh/ consonant does not occur intervocalically. Consonant gemination is only possible after /i,a,u/ vowels medially. Aspirated stop consonants never occur with unaspirated stops of different series. Two retroflex consonants of different series also do not occur together.

Urdu is an inflectional language. Like many other Indo-Aryan languages, it has the same morphological and syntactical structure. Morphologically, Urdu has various types of morphemes. The inflectional morphemes are associated with certain conceptual categories. Both the inflectional morphemes and grammatical categories define certain word classes as nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verbs etc. The grammatical categories of Urdu are gender, number, person, case, mood, aspect, voice tense, etc. All Urdu word classes cannot be classified on the basis of morphological criteria. Certain word classes are either morphologically invariant or show only a few derivational morphemes (affixes). Thus, the post-position, particles, adverb, connective, interjection, etc. fall under this category.

Word structures of Urdu are of three types: simple, complex and compound. The most frequently used morphological processes in the derivation of stems are affixation, reduplication, internal change, compounding and suppletion. There are two genders: masculine and feminine; two numbers: singular and plural; three persons: first, second and third; three cases: direct, oblique and vocative; four moods: indicative, imperative, infinitive and optional; two voices: active and passive; and three main tenses: present, past and future in Urdu. These grammatical categories are tied up with each other.

Various significant word classes like the noun, adjective, pronoun and verb are characterized by certain grammatical categories. Nouns are inflected for number, gender and case whereas pronouns generally show number, persons and case distinction. Verbs can be distinguished in terms of inflectional categories such as gender, number, person, tense, mood, aspect and voice. Verbal stems may be characterized as intransitive, transitive and causative. This distinction is based on internal change and affixation. Verbal forms are further characterized by degrees of regard and respect in social status and relationship. Verbal auxiliaries may be called inflectional and non-inflectional. They may also occur as the main verb in certain cases. Among other word classes certain connectives assume Perso-Arabic character like /o/ and /va/ which occur between the linked elements.

The structure of Urdu sentences contain nominatives and predicates. The relative elements always occur between them. Sentence construction may be termed as Endocentric and Exocentric. According to form classes, they may be grouped into three: subjectival, objectival and neutral. If the verb is in past participle form, the construction of sentences will be objectival or neutral but impressive verb always has nominative construction even if a verb is in a past participle form. Urdu sentences may allow two objectives. They are called primary and secondary to first and second objects respectively. In Urdu construction, the secondary object always comes before the primary object. Phrasal construction frequently uses Persian 'Izāfat' and Arabic 'atf-e-vāo' for 'of' and 'and' senses respectively. 'Izāfat' connects two words denoting the possessor and the possessed into a word through the use of a stress and without using any additional letter. 'atf' is the letter 'w' which connects two words and serves as a conjunction between nouns.

A sentence consists of various word classes which are related to each other. Their agreement may be seen in the verb with subject and object, pronoun with noun, genetive with the word to which it is related and the adjective with the word qualified by it, etc. In case the subject is non-inflected the verb agrees with its gender, person and number. With honorofic nominatives the verb agrees with plural forms. When two or more nominatives of the same gender, number and person occur then the verb will take the plural form of the same gender. With some nominatives of different gender, the verb generally takes the masculine plural form but if several nominatives have masculine and feminine forms the verb may agree with the nominative nearest to it. In case of nominatives with three different persons, the verb will be in the third person (Naseer Ahmad, *Elements of Urdu Structure*, J. N. U., New Delhi).

Vocabulary

Urdu vocabulary consists of native and non-native lexicons. Non-native items have been borrowed either directly or indirectly from different Indian and foreign languages particularly Persian, Arabic, Turkish, Pashtu, Telugu, Kannada, English and of course, New Indo-Aryan languages. The borrowed items are in practice with *Tatsama* (unassimilated) and *Tadbhava* (assimilated) forms in Urdu among which *Tatsama* are less in number. Borrowing has taken place in the language through the process of dialect, cultural and intimate borrowings. According to its nature, Urdu vocabulary may be classified into four groups: the first group consists of *Tatsama* and *Tadbhava* forms of Sanskrit; second includes all native words of the language; third covers such items which have non-Indo-Aryan character; in the fourth group, we list the lexical elements belonging to New Indo-Aryan languages like Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Sindhi and Bengali. Urdu speakers have different frequencies of these four groups of lexicon

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in their speech habits depending on their sex, social status, age, education, race and region.

Script

Urdu is written in Perso-Arabic script which in view of the sweeping modifications, is now called Urdu script. It has incidentally been adopted by the language from the very beginning, perhaps in the 12th century A.D. by different scholars like Marsud Sa'd Salmān and Bāba Farīd who happened to write their own languages as Arabic, Turkish and Persian in the said script. The original Arabic alphabet contains twenty-eight letters divisible into 19 basic forms but they can be differentiated from each other in their group by adding dots, combination of dots and some other diacritics above and below the letters. Later on, Persian has added different dot combinations and 'markaz' (lines above the letters) to these various shapes and has produced more sounds not found in Arabic. Similarly, Urdu further added a few more signs and modified the letters to produce retroflexion, aspiration and vowel nasalization. The Urdu alphabet now consists of forty-seven letters which are divisible as vowels, consonants and aspirated consonants. According to definite rules laid down by traditional practices, each letter in a written word either remains separate and distinct from neighbouring letters, or is written jointly with it.

There are three varieties of the script which are generally used in Urdu such as 'Naskh', 'Nastālīq, and 'Shakistah'. Among them, 'Nastālīq' is of great importance as all the published material of the Urdu language is produced through this variety while 'Naskh' is commonly used in Arabic quotations and 'Shakistah' in personal or official dealings respectively. Except for numerical figures which are written from left to right, the direction of writing of Urdu script is from right to left.

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Section 2

FOLK LITERATURE

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Introduction

K. M. GEORGE & K. AYYAPPA PANIKER

Primarily oral in origin and transmission, folk literature is of anonymous authorship and uncertain dates. The scholars of the past were more interested in the formal and sophisticated types of literature than in the simple and unsophisticated utterances which did not appear worth preserving. For the same reason very few Indian writers thought it fit to record the folk-songs of ancient India which were quite plentiful. Comparatively speaking the attention given to folk items is recent everywhere, particularly so in India. And perhaps no field of learning is more misunderstood than folklore. The student of this branch of literature is faced with special problems, viz. the lack of documentary evidence of an authoritative nature to settle a text precisely, the difficulty to ascertain the period or place of origin, and equally so the temptation to draw parallels based on coincidental similarities inevitable in a long oral tradition. Despite all such difficulties and drawbacks, folk literature provides a rich source for the study of peasant culture.

Apart from linguistic differences, thematic and structural variations are also to be expected. While they are comparatively free from doctrinal ideas and are generally simple and unsophisticated in thought as well as expression, they may occasionally appear fantastic to the modern mind. They may be said to come directly from life and hence may be taken to reflect socio-political reality more truthfully than the more elitist forms of literature. The spirit of the community is well preserved in folk literature.

The major items of folk literature are folk-songs, folk-tales, folk-plays, ballads, aphorisms, proverbs and riddles. The folk-song itself is a broad category with various sub divisions like ceremonial songs, occupational songs, marriage songs, boat songs, love songs, nursery songs, etc. Folk-tales including fairy tales form another important item. In a majority of cases, there is a continuous prose narrative centering on the fortunes of a hero or heroine who undergoes a series of adventures leading to a particular goal. Simplicity, wit and a certain amount of coarseness are typical of these tales. Then there are ballads which are heroic in theme, narrative in style and composed to be recited or sung. A folk-play is usually an improvised performance of some kind retaining an essential outline, though considerably changed in detail. There are also rhymes, riddles and proverbs which display the rich experience and traditional wit of a community.

A study of peasant (rustic) culture is made possible through folk literature. This culture has a strong regional flavour though the national throb is also identifiable. It is also possible to note certain common strands if we examine the international cross-section of the unsophisticated culture. India has a rich and ancient folk tradition. Some Indian folk-songs of pre-Gupta times have been preserved in Chinese translation (see A. L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, New York, Grove Press, 1959, p. 476). The worship of Yakshas and Nagas and other folk deities constituted the most important part of primitive religious beliefs, in which *Bhakti* had a conspicuous part to play. The

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folk cults centred on Nagas and Yakshas, however, appear to have survived in the orthodox Brahminical fold in the garb of worship of Ganesha whose hybrid figure was the amalgam of pot-bellied Yaksha and the elephantine Naga (meaning both a snake and an elephant).

The surveys that follow reveal many common elements of folk culture which exist in the major languages. All of them have songs on work, recreation, festival and ritual. There are also folk-plays of social significance, and proverbs and riddles which bespeak the traditional wit and imagination of the people. Some of the common features are tentatively identified.

Similarities

Festival Songs. Festivals are occasions when people get together to enjoy performances of music or drama. Though festivals may vary from place to place and language to language, the medium of entertainment has many things in common. There are also common festivals with regional variations. *Bihu* songs in Assamese remind one of similar songs celebrating the birth of the new year (Bihu is a variant of Viṣu). *Tusu* songs (Bengali), *Phalguna* songs (Hindi), *Tija* (Punjabi), *Tiruviḷapāṭṭu* (Tamil) are important festival songs. *Dīwāḷi*, *Dussera*, *Śivarātṛi*, *Durga Navami* and *Īd* are occasions for festivities found in various regions. Festivals of harvest such as *Poṅgal* in Tamilnadu are common with different names. The agricultural festival songs in Marathi called *Poḷā* have similarities with *Māṭṭupoṅgal* of Tamilnadu when oxen are decorated and worshipped.

Ritualistic songs connected with rituals are an important variety of folk poetry. *Kāḷi* worship appears to be based on a kind of folk religion prevalent in most parts of India. It is particularly so in Kerala, Bengal and Assam. Kali is a folk goddess with varying names: 'Āi' or 'Śītala' (Assam), 'Amman' or 'Māriamman' in Kerala and Tamilnadu, etc. She is the goddess of the pox and ritualistic songs are sung to propitiate her.

Occupational songs are those sung by workers when they do their work to make the work less taxing and monotonous. They are another variety one comes across in every region. *Maiśāl* in Bengali, *Toḷilpāṭṭu* in Tamil, *Hamarco* and *Valāro* in Sindhi are good examples.

There are also songs and plays composed mainly for recreation. *Kai koṭṭikkaḷi* in Malayalam, *Garakhiya gīt* (cowboy songs) of Assamese, *Kōlāṭṭam* in Tamil, *Chitākutā gīta* in Oriya are interesting examples. Boat songs, particularly in areas where lakes and rivers abound, are another variety. *Nāo-Khēlar gīt* in Assamese, *Vañcippāṭṭu* in Malayalam, *Abavani* or *Bhāmani* in Gujarati may be cited.

Marriage songs are a widely prevalent category which are partly recreational and partly ceremonial. In every language we have examples: *Vātil tuṛappāṭṭu* in Malayalam, *Vanavun* in Kashmiri, *Jalwa* songs in Urdu, *Viyyāla vāri pāṭalu* in Telugu and *Kalyaāṇappāṭṭu* in Tamil come under this category. In Assamese this category termed *Biya-Nām* is particularly interesting. There is also a mock marriage song where the bride and bridegroom are frogs, whose marriage will cause rainfall.

There are love songs and prayer songs in almost every language. The musical quality of these songs as in the *Baul* in Bengali and *Vātsun* in Kashmiri is particularly high. The influence of the rhyme and rhythm of folk-songs on the structure of sophisticated poetry mentioned in the surveys is worth studying.

Riddles and Proverbs. The role of proverbs has been expressed in a beautiful proverb in Kannada which can be rendered as: 'A pickle before a meal; a proverb before a talk'. In every language we have these rhyme-bound expressions of vast experience. Riddles are witty expressions of intellectual acrobatics found in all the Indian languages. A number of compilations are available for the student of comparative literature.

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Folk-tales. Folk-tales have not received considerable emphasis in the surveys as their literary quality is not very high. However, their cultural importance should not be underestimated. Some of these tales have travelled from place to place and hence the common area is considerable. Fables and tales for imparting morals to children have been taken by all languages from *Pañcatantra* and *Hitōpadeśa* in Sanskrit. Myths and religious folk-tales have also migrated from region to region.

Folk-drama. Folk-drama is linked with all kinds of seasonal observances and rituals, They are improvised performances in open fields, street corners and sometimes in the precincts of the village temples. *Terukkūttu* of Tamil, *Yakṣagāna* of Kannada and Telugu are valuable folk-plays. *Jātra* is the oldest living folk theatre in Bengal. *Jātra* plays are found not only in Bengali but in neighbouring languages too. Incarnations of Vishnu known as *Daśāvatār* (Ten Avatārās) are presented in the form of folk-plays in many languages. Mention may also be made of *Tamāśa* and *Lalit* of Marathi, *Rās* and *Naqal* of Punjabi, *Kākkāriśi* of Malayalam and *Bhāvai* of Gujarati.

Distinctive Features

Though the common traits are quite considerable, the distinctive features of each language are also worthy of attention. A detailed study is essential to identify such features, and hence only some indications can be given here.

Love themes are quite common in almost all Indian languages with the probable exception of Marathi. Durga Bhagavat, an authority on Marathi folk literature, points out this striking absence. The Radha-Krishna theme is very common in Indo-Aryan languages like Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, etc.; but it is not so common in the folk literature of South Indian languages. Radha worship and Rāsa-līla, for instance, are not found in the folk literature of Kerala. *Gita Govinda* is not of Kerala nor is it folk literature.

In Kerala alone do we find a substantial contribution to folk literature from Christian and Jewish sources. Muslim elements are better absorbed in Bengali, Malayalam and Urdu. In Urdu the influence is reciprocal. Every child is 'Nandalal' and that is why female singers invariably sing in every Hindu and Muslim household, 'Āj paida hue Nandalāl'. In Bengali the theme of inter-communal (Hindu and Muslim) love is more common than in Malayalam. Urdu represents the blending of cultures and so too does Punjabi to a lesser extent.

The proportion of Dravidian and Aryan elements may vary from language to language. Literary movements of an all-India character are rarely found in the development of folk literature which is essentially more regional than other literary forms. However, a search beyond these diverse manifestations of folk literature, especially to the roots of rituals and festivals, will reveal a substantial common denominator encompassing what may be termed 'the soul of India'.

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Assamese

NAGEN SAIKIA

Folk literature is the expression of the feelings and imagination, thoughts and ideas, habits and customs, techniques and behaviour of the people of a particular society. Folk literature has a close relationship with the natural environment, demographic structure, and socio-economic and socio-political conditions of the society concerned. This has to be borne in mind while surveying Assamese folk literature.

The bulk of Assamese folk literature can be divided into three sections: folk-songs, aphorisms and sayings, and folk-tales. From a linguistic point of view, folk literature does not represent the diction and style of its origins; rather it reveals the everchanging character of its sources. But from the point of view of content and sentiment, much of Assamese folk literature represents its original spirit.

Folk-songs

The greater part of Assamese folk literature is in verse and is replete with the folk music of the past. The lucidity of their language, the tenderness and spontaneity of the feelings expressed, and their meaningful similes and metaphors have made Assamese folk-songs distinctive.

Assamese folk-songs can be divided into three categories: (i) ceremonial and ritual songs, (ii) ballads, and (iii) miscellaneous.

Ceremonial Songs. The *Bihu* songs (sung during the Assamese spring festival 'Bihu'), marriage songs, *Āi Nām* (prayer songs sung to Āi, the goddess of the pox), *Lakhimi Sabāhar Gīt* (songs sung to Lakhimi, the goddess of cereals), *Apeśvarā Sabāhar Nām* (songs to Apeswara, a goddess of evil power who is said to make one weak), *Sadāśivar Nām* (songs to Sadasiva, i.e. Siva), *Mah Khedā Gīt* (songs sung to drive away mosquitoes), etc. are some of the Assamese ceremonial songs.

The Assamese celebrate three *Bihus*—*Bohāg Bihu*, *Kāti Bihu* and *Māgh Bihu*—as national festivals. *Bohāg Bihu*, the principal festival, is celebrated from the last date of Caitra to the sixth day of Baisākha, but actually extends over the whole month of Baisākha (Bohāg). The first day is called *Garu Bihu*, the *Bihu* for the cow. Early in the morning the household cattle are anointed with the paste of turmeric, pulse and mustard oil and taken to the nearest bathing place. After the animals are bathed, their owners throw over them vegetable slices, whip them with two varieties of twigs and then recite:

Take gourd, take brinjal,
  Grow from year to year,
Your mother is small, your father is small
  Let you be a large one.

In the evening a fire that gives abundant smoke is lit at the entrance to the cattle-shed, so that flies and mosquitoes do not disturb the cattle.

The next day is *Mānuh Bihu*. This *Bihu*, for human beings, is celebrated up to the sixth of the Baisākh, during which period the males of the village band together and visit the village households, singing and dancing the *Huchari* and the *Bihu*. In the Huchari part, no love song is sung. It is often called a *māngalik*, i.e. auspicious institution, and is greatly influenced by the Vaishnavite movement of the great saint of Assam, Sri Sankaradeva. But there are also some *Huchari* songs which have no touch of religion, e.g.

Hucharie' c'at
Āmi Bihu māro j'ot
Dubario nagaje t'ot.

Huchari is celebrated from the Caitra,
Where we sing and dance, it becomes so smooth
That no grass can grow there. (tr.)

But most *Huchari* songs sing of Krishna and Rama, e.g.

Being soaked in the dew
On the head of Krishna
The bakul flower unfolded its petals,

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Hari Hari Gopāla Govinda Rām

or

Oh Ram, the Lord, what have you done
You have sent virtuous Sita to the wild forest
While she was going to be a mother.

As soon as the *Huchari* part is over, the singers express words of blessings and begin the *Bihu* dance and song. They generally begin by singing:

Lord Brahma created the seeds of songs
And Lord Krishna created the songs.
If we sing something related to love
Please excuse us.

Bihu dances and songs are meant to arouse erotic feelings. The dancers are usually women, sometimes joined by young boys and girls and the men accompany them with drums, cymbals, flute, buffalo-horn flute, etc. The boys and girls sing of love, asking questions and replying to them through the songs. In some areas of Dibrugarh district, only the girls dance and sing the Bihu. They generally use the *gagaṇā*, a mouth organ made of bamboo, and the *takā*, a kind of cymbals also made of bamboo.

During the Āhom reign, the *Bihu* groups were invited to the yard of the Raṅg-ghar, the outdoor stadium house, and to the residences of officials. When they came to amuse the king, they sang:

Our king is coming out from the palace
And the palanquin carriers have become ready.
Narā-jāngfāi (a kind of ear-ornament) is glittering in his ears
And he is wearing a beautiful shirt of *gomcheng* silk.

Bihu songs can be divided, according to subject matter, into several groups, such as songs of pure *Bihu*, *Angarāg*, *Purvarāg*, *Anurāg*, *Praṇaya*, *Biṣād*, *Veda*, *Virāg*, *Prema*, *Prema-vaicitra*, *Sambhoga*, *Viraha* and miscellaneous.

Marriage Song or Biyā-Nam. An Assamese marriage is indeed a musical marriage. At every stage, from the earliest negotiations to the end, women sing appropriate songs.

The girl is considered the beauty of the household and so it is a matter of sorrow when she is to be given away to a young man of another place:

The front-yard is beautiful with areca-nut trees
And the back-yard is beautiful with betel-leaf creepers.
The inside of the house is beautiful with the maiden
It is very difficult to give her away. (tr.)

Another song says:

The mother is weeping for love of her daughter;
But why is the father weeping?
It was the father who gave his word to the bridegroom
To give her daughter to him. (tr.)

The marriage songs themselves are divided into groups such as *Joron-diyā Nām* (songs sung at the time of wearing ornaments, clothes and vermilion presented by the bride groom), *No-owa Nām* (sung when the bride is anointed with the paste of turmeric, pulses and mustard oil), *Gā-dhuwā Nām* (sung at the time of bathing), *Gāthiyan-khundā Nām* (sung when grinding the roots of the gāthiyan reeds), *Pānitolā Nām* (sung when the mother goes to bring sacred water from some tank or river), *Suāguri-tolā Nām* (sung when receiving the bridegroom at the gate), *Chowāli-uliwā Nām* (sung when taking the bride to the place where the sacred fire is burning), *Sampradānar Nām* (sung when, after reciting mantras from the Vedas, the father ceremonially offers his daughter to the bridegroom).

In the house of the bridegroom, too, songs are sung. But the songs sung in his house are joyful, unlike those sung in the bride's house which are pathetic in tone. There are also some songs sung to tease the bridegroom and his party, e.g.

O swarthy fellow, salt and *āmlaki* (gooseberry) do you taste
You did penance in some past life, a beauty like our Sita to get. (tr.)

or

The post of the pandal is loosely kept,
The people coming with the bridegroom are demon-eyed (tr.)

It is common to call the bride Sita or Rukmini and the bridegroom Rama or Krishna in Assamese marriage songs.

In Assamese society, when a girl attains puberty, a pseudo-marriage is celebrated called *Noāi-tolani biyā*. In this type of marriage too, songs are sung befitting the occasion.

Frog-marriage Song. When the rains fail and drought threatens, the villagers catch two frogs—a male and a female—and arrange a mock marriage ceremony. Such a marriage, it is believed, can cause rainfall. All the rituals of an Assamese marriage are observed. But in the songs sung there is an underlying tone of a prayer, e.g.

In the upper region the sound of the drum-beating is heard,
The *Dabā* (Damama) is being beaten in the Deva temple
Oh, frog, please go to your country
And make the rain fall for the people. (tr.)

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In one song Indra, the God of Cloud and Rain, is supposed to attend this marriage ceremony:

Indra, being soaked in the rain,
is coming to attend
the marriage of the frog.
The celestial nymphs, having heard the news,
are also coming to attend. (tr.)

Āi-nām. In Assamese, the word *Āi* means mother; but it is also used as a proper noun to honour the Goddess of the Pox. The Goddess of the Pox is also called *Śitaḷā*, she who cools the body of a sufferer. Even the word suffering is not generally used; rather, it is said that Āi is coming out or Āi is drawing floral designs on the body of her child. So, in the name of Āi, the women sing prayer songs expressing their submission to the goddess and asking for her blessings. They sing:

Āi is coming to visit her places,
We beg our lives of her.
Unconsciously did we trespass into Āi's flower garden.
Unawares did we pick the buds.
Forgive our crime for once, Oh, Bhavāni,
We prostrate ourselves at your feet.

In our poor houses nothing do we have to offer,
We shall rub your feet with our hair,
And shall lie down to make fords of our bodies. (tr.)

Apēśvarā Sabāhar Gīt. Apeswara is an imaginary nymph who is believed to travel in the sky. In a person steps unawares on her shadow, on earth, that person will suffer from eye-disease, mumps, general weakness, etc. A young girl's attainment of puberty will be delayed. To make their peace with the nymph, the women sing prayers invoking her blessings:

On Sunday noon we put our steps on your shadow
being unaware of it.
We now pray, Oh, Apeswara to you, not to
take our fault as a motivated one. (tr.)

Sadāśivar Nām. Sadasiva, or Siva, is the most popular god in Assam. Even the Vaishnava movement embraced Siva as one of the Trinity. Siva, in folk-imagination, is a god who can be satisfied easily; he wears a tiger-skin, wears snakes as ornaments, wears his hair matted and stays intoxicated with hemp. Siva behaves like the unsuccessful master of a household, but his love for his devotees is unquestionable.

In most of the songs to Siva, he is described as an amusing god, but yet a popular and respected one.

Oh, Mahadeva, by taking hemp
You have become mad.
Being intoxicated you remain outside
And sometimes even forget the name of your consort.
(tr.)

Lakhimī Sabāhar Gīt. Lakhimi, i.e. Lakshmi, the goddess of cereals and wealth, is not worshipped in Assam in the Brahminical manner. Generally, in Baisākha and Jaistha, that is, just before the paddy cultivation season begins, a *Lakhimī Sabāh* is arranged in order to request her not to leave the country but to give her full blessings. Again, when the paddy in the field is attacked by insects or by unknown disease, a *Lakhimī Sabāh* is arranged to ask her to protect the crops. After the harvest is completed, the last bunch of paddy is brought formally to the house and kept under the roof of the storehouse. At that time, too, songs are sung to Lakhimi.

The *Lakhimī Sabāh* is also a function of the womenfolk. A softness of tune and diction is characteristic of all songs sung by women at functions. The *Lakhimī Sabāhar Gīt* also possesses this feature, e.g,

The rice-plant is small,
But 'manikimadhuri' (a kind of paddy) has bowed down
the plants.
Oh, Mother Lakhimi, please avoid going to other places,
Our rice-store is yet to be filled up. (tr.)

Another song contains this prayer to protect the cereals:

Some evil power has let the insects loose.
Oh, what would be the condition, if they eat up everything?
Lakhimi, be kind to us and protect our crops. (tr.)

Mah-Khedā Gīt. When mosquitoes increase, it is believed that some evil power is doing this to make the people suffer. Therefore to frighten it, the youths assemble, take bamboo sticks and twigs from trees, and sing songs to drive the mosquitoes away. They sing:

Oh ho ho, Mah ho ho!
Take a stick to drive out mosquito.
We shall drive out the mother of the mosquitoes.
She shall have to leave this place
By the port of the river Burhādiyā. (tr.)

These songs have some amusing sequences as in nursery rhymes.

Deh-bichārar Gīt. There is a secret sect in Assam which observes some functions called 'Purna-sewā' or 'Bar-sewā' and 'Bhitar-sewa'. This sect is commonly called *Rātikhowā Sampradāya*, a sect which observes its rituals at night. It is associated with Tantric rituals and may be compared with

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a crypto-Buddhistic sect. Its songs are also very cryptic, like the *Charyā-padas*, the songs written by the Tantric Buddhists before the 12th century. But there is a curious tendency to end each song with the name of either Shri Sankaradeva or Madhavadeva, the Vaishnava saints of Assam, and this is enough to make people believe in the sacredness of the songs. These songs are sung secretly.

Some *Borāgīs* or wandering mendicants, however, sing these songs to the tune of their *Tokāri*, a stringed-instrument made of a gourd and a piece of bamboo or wood. The cryptic nature of the songs can easily be seen from the following example:

Slay your Guru, slay the devotee,
Slay your 'uterine' brother.
Beat unto death your fellow-devotee
For then only you may realize your Guru. (tr.)

Here the 'Guru' stands for the mind, 'devotee' for the senses, the 'brother' for equal thought and 'fellow-devotee for one's own body.

These *Deh-bichārar Gīt* have influenced other folk-songs as well including the *Zikirs*, the Muslim religious songs of Assam composed in the 17th century by Shahmilan, popularly known as the Ājān Fakir. Though these songs cannot be classified as folk-songs, because they were composed by a known man, the songs nevertheless have the same tone and taste of the Assamese folk-songs, mainly of the *Deh-bichār* songs and of some *Bihu* songs.

Ballads. Ballads constitute a large portion of Assamese folk literature. Originally they were sung to the accompaniment of dance. But later they were sung to the accompaniment of the *Tokāri* or *Biṇā* and cymbals. Of course, the singing of ballads is now rare.

Assamese ballads, so far discovered and collected, are the *Janā Gābharur Gīt* (the ballad of the maid Jana), *Nāharar Gīt* (the ballad of Nahar), *Cikan Sariyahar Gīt* (the ballad of Cikan Sariyah), *Manikonwarar Gīt* (the ballad of Prince Mani), *Phul Konwarar Gīt* (the ballad of Prince Phul), *Dubalā Śāntir Gīt* (the ballad of the virtuous lady Dubala), *Pagalā-Pārvatīr Gīt* (the ballad of the eccentric Siva and Parvati), *Jayamatīr Gīt* (the ballad of Jayamati), *Badan Borphukonar Gīt* (the ballad of Badan Borphukan), *Haraduttar Gīt* (the ballad of Haradatta), *Manirām Dewānar Gīt* (the ballad of Maniram Dewan), *Kaliyugar Gīt* (the ballad of the Kali age), *Bhumikampar Gīt* (the ballad of the earthquake), *Kamalā Kunwarīr Gīt* (the ballad of the Princess Kamala). Of these 14 ballads, those relating to Jaymati, Badan Borphukan, Haradatta and Maniram Dewan are historical ballads, while the others, except for the ballad of Siva and Parvati have blurred historical perspectives. Of course, imagination and supernatural elements play remarkable roles in these ballads, all of which (except the Siva-Parvati ballads) are sad in tone.

As an example, I quote from the ballad of Maniram Dewan, the first martyr of Assam, who was hanged by the British in 1857 for demanding the liberation of Assam from the British yoke.

You smoked upon a gold hookah, O Maniram,
You smoked upon a silver hookah.
What treason did you commit to the Royalty
That you got a rope round your neck? (tr.)

Assamese ballads are usually composed as quatrains. Sometimes, a line without any relevant meaning is sung to regulate the rhythm of the next few lines. Thus:

The leaf of the red *madār*
O, *Nāhar*, you have come so late at night
You have taken your meal you know not where. (tr.)

Junā. There are some other kinds of ballads related to useful household things. *Tāntir Junā* (ballad of the weaver), *Nāngalar Junā* (ballad of the plough), *Kapāhar Junā* (ballad of the cotton), *Jatarar Junā* (ballad of the spinning wheel) etc. are some of these ballads. These are called *Junā*, while the other ballads are called *Malitā* in Assamese. In a *Junā* generally the origin of the thing concerned is described and is ascribed to be heavenly.

There are some other ballads sung by the drummers. Three kinds of drums are generally used—*Dhol*, *Khol* and *Mṛdaṅga*. The *Dhol* is used in the *Bihu* festival and in the marriage ceremony, while the *Khol* and *Mṛdaṅga* are used mainly in religious functions. Ballads related to the three kinds of drums, include *Malitā* (ballad of the *Dhol*), *Khola Malitā* (ballad of the *Khol*) and *Mṛdaṅgar Malitā* (ballad of the *Mṛdaṅga*).

Miscellaneous Types. *Nichukani Gīt* (nursery rhymes), *Garakhīyā Gīt* (cowboy songs), *Tokāri-Gīt* (songs played on the stringed instrument, as in the case of *Deh-bichārar Gīt*), *Nāo-khelar Gīt* (songs sung while boating), *Bāramāhī Gīt* (songs describing the effect of each month on the minds of lovers), *Dhemeliā Gīt* (funny songs), etc. are included under this heading.

For a detailed account of nursery rhymes in Assamese see the article on Children's Literature.

Garakhiyā-Gīt, or cowboy songs, are sung by children when playing games among themselves. Most of these songs are of the question-and-answer type.

Tokāri songs are of many kinds. Generally *Deh-bichārar* songs are sung to the accompaniment of the *tokāri*. But there is a large number of *tokāri* songs not related to the *Deh-bichārar* songs. In the district of Kamrup, there are many songs of this kind most of them being related to Krishna. There is a saying that there can be no song without

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Krishna. These folk-songs were written by unknown composers who were highly influenced by the *Bargits* (songs composed by Shri Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva on a classical base but to indigenous folk tunes) and other songs composed by the different religious masters at different times.

Nāo-Khelar Gīt, the songs sung while boating, especially at Borpeta during the Holi festival, reveal some Vaishnavite influence in their subject matter. But some of these songs are very funny too.

Bāramāhī songs are, to some extent, ballad-like. In these songs, the natural changes that take place from month to month and the psychological effect these changes have on the mind of the beloved or the wife who is living alone away from her husband or lover, are described in a sorrowful tone. The descriptions begin from the month of Agrahāyaṇa and end in Kārtika. *Śānti-Bāramāhī*, *Kanyā Bāramāhī*, *Sitā-Bāramāhī*, *Madhumatīr Gīt*, *Rādhā-Bāramāhī* and *Rām-Bāramāhī* are the six *Bāramāhī* songs that have so far been found.

There are some funny songs which are called *Dhemeliā Gīt*. These songs are purely humorous. Their subjects, taken from the everyday life, include, tea, vegetables, the homestead of the Bhaoria (who loves to give delight), the merit of a stick, the birth of a cow, going to buy a cow, going fishing, etc.

In the Goalpara district, songs about the elephant and buffalo are very popular. There are also songs of love and the erotic feelings of a lover and his beloved. Some of these songs are of a serious nature, like the *Deh-bichārar Gīts*. The *biṇā*, a stringed instrument, accompanies these songs which carry a sobbing note, e.g.

There is no moon in the sky,
What can the stars do?
The woman who has no man for her,
What is the meaning of her beauty?

Proverbs and Aphorisms

The Assamese language is rich in proverbs and aphorisms. Even now, village-folk make their speech meaningful by using such proverbs and aphorisms. Indirectness of expression is a characteristic of most proverbs and aphorisms.

Some proverbs have their origin in an incident or a story. For example, the proverb 'to kill an elephant and put the carcass in a little earthern pot' is derived from a work of Sankaradeva. Naranarayana, the King of Koch-Behar, desired that Sankaradeva, who was present in Court, compose overnight a small book containing the entire sum and substance of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. And Sankaradeva did it. *Guṇamālā* is his achievement in verse. The proverb derived from this story indicates the impossibility of carrying out some orders or desires. The *Burañjis*, the Assamese chronicles contain a number of significant sayings.

Proverbs play a vital role in day-to-day speech. For instance, when a person feels insulted and somebody sympathizes, the insulted person replies, 'Don't apply salt to a wound'. The political wisdom of the man-in-the-street is reflected, when a person says 'he who has been bitten once by a serpent starts up even at the sight of a rope', etc.

The sayings of Dāk Puruṣa, an ancient, are of aphoristic character and are used commonly. Dāk's sayings refer to all aspects of a peasant's daily routine, birth, rituals, morals, politics, the choice of a wife, cultivation, purchase of cattle, cooking, auspicious days, the rains, etc. These sayings, all in verse, are taken as equal to the injunctions of the Vedas by Assamese peasants. 'Buy the land that is lower in the middle; and marry a girl whose mother is surely good. The wife promotes the welfare of the household whose teeth are small, voice soft, who lights the lamp promptly at dusk, and addresses every one gently. Know her as inauspicious whose eyes are reddish, mind fickle and lips thick. Avoid her on the street who has her belly, back and brow high.'

Riddles

Riddles are used for recreation as well as to win over a person. Some riddles are connected with particular stories, others are of general nature. One person recites a riddle and another is invited to solve it. If the latter fails, he is considered as defeated. For instance, one person asks,

The fruit on the tree
The tree on the fruit
What is that shameless entity? (tr.)

The answer is: the pineapple.

The hero of the ballad *Janā-gābharu* was asked 'to name a piece of arecanut which does not grow on any tree, which is not "cuttable" with any knife, and on which the lime is not smeared by hand'. The solution is not in the ballad, but it is recorded that the hero gave the proper answer.

There are some *Bhakatīyā Phakarā*, or religious riddles, which contain secret meanings. If the person asked fails to answer with equal mastery, he is taken to be unequal in religious knowledge.

Some riddles are based on the word-technique. By twisting words or making puns on them, the meaning is kept hidden. Without mastery over the language, nobody can solve such riddles.

Folk-tales

The Assamese equivalent for folk-tale is *Sādhu Kathā*. There are two types of folk-tales, one for recreational

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purposes, the other with a moral to reveal. The stories of the first kind also have a moral to illustrate, but they do not do so directly. As for example, in the story in which a boy is caught by a demon disguised as a humble man, the boy is taken to an underground palace and is kept in a room. In the same room is a girl of the same age. She tells him that she is being kept there as a meal for the demon. They, however, discover that the demon, while he sleeps, keeps his soul in a vase made of green gourd; if the gourd can be stolen, they might get a chance to escape. They find the gourd and the boy breaks it into pieces. Simultaneously the demon breathes his last with a great roar. The boy and the girl take as much wealth as they can and go away to their own place to get married.

In some stories, social superstitions and customs are reflected. In the story of Kamala Kunwari, she sacrifices her life by plunging into the water to save the drought-affected country.

There are some stories which reflect the influence of *mantras* and obscure cults. Stories about different gods and goddesses are also very popular. The influence of the Indian epics and the *Purāṇas* and of the Vaishnavite myths and legends are seen in these stories.

The stories with a moral mainly relate to the bird and animal world. The birds and the animals in them speak and act like human beings. In these stories Truth and Goodness always triumph over evil. One such story is that of the crow, deer and the jackal. The jackal, tempted to make a meal of the deer, goes to him in the guise of a friend and takes him to a paddy-field where a net has been spread, by the peasants. The deer is caught in the net. The crow, a true friend, advises the deer to jump out as soon as the peasants begin to fold the net. The deer does so and escapes. A stick which is thrown by a peasant at the deer, hits the jackal, who has been hiding under a bush, and kills it. The fables of Aesop, fables from the *Pañcatantra* and from other sources have had an influence on many of these stories. Assamese folk-tales inherit the same qualities of other Indian and world fables of a similar kind. But Assamese fables have some indigenous characteristics as well. Some folk-tales popular among different ethnic and linguistic groups have found their way into the Assamese language with little or no variations. The story of *Teton Tāmuli*, the story of the 'seven foolish brothers', the story of the 'snake prince', etc. may be cited as examples of such stories.

It was Lakshminath Bezbaroa who, in the early part of the 20th century, collected for the first time a number of popular Assamese folk-tales and compiled them in two volumes, one under the title *Kakādeutār Sādhu*, the stories told by the grandfather and the other *Burhi Āir Sādhu*—the stories told by the grandmother. These folk-tales are the very essence of Assamese creativity.

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Bengali

SUHRID KUMAR BHOWMIK

Origin and Sources

From time immemorial at least four ethno-linguistic groups, Austro-Asiatic (or the *Kols*), Dravidian, Tibeto-Chinese and the Aryans have met and flourished in India. The culture of Bengal is a compound product of these groups. Chronologically the Aryans entered the land last where the *Kols* had been living from the very beginning of their civilization. From the linguistic study of place names, popular words in the dialects, speech habits and prosody, it appears that the *Kols*' contribution to Bengal's culture was the most dominant though its language has sprung from Indo-Aryan languages. In an article titled 'Bāṅgālir Utpatti' (The Origin of the Bengali Race) Bankim Chandra rightly pointed out that the non-Aryan *Kols* and Dravids, mixed with the Aryans, gave rise to the Bengali race. About 77 per cent of the scheduled tribes in West Bengal belong to the *Kol* group according to the 1971 Census. The pre-Aryan impact on Bengal's culture should therefore be kept in mind while discussing the sources of Bengali folk culture.

Though 'art literature' in India arose earlier than in Europe, folk literature in India, unlike its parallel in Europe, has not been displaced to this day. It is still very alive and changes its thematic content alongside the natural and political events in the country. It seems that it is always getting a new lease of life while retaining its unsophisticated character.

Bengali folk literature may be roughly divided into four categories: poetical compositions, oral tales, proverbs and riddles, and folk-drama.

Poetical Compositions

Nursery Rhymes (Charā). Nursery rhymes are well known in all literatures. Mothers sing or recite cradle songs and lullabies to babies, everywhere. In Bengal such songs and verses are known as *chele bhulāno chaṛā* (Rhymes for Relaxing Children). Rabindranath Tagore introducing his collection of folk-rhymes in *Lok Sāhitya* (Folk Literature, 1894) says: 'The child today is just as new and delicate, as sweet and foolish, as he was on the first of all days. This is because a child is Nature's creation while a grown up-man is fabricated largely by himself. Nursery rhymes, being child literature, are natural creations.' This is why among so many branches of folk literature, these songs for the

nursery and cradle are so lively though unsophisticated. Tagore has shown the way to appreciate them as literary creations. Here is a rough translation of one such rhyme by some forgotten village composer which continues to delight Bengali children:

Yamunāvati Saraswati weds tomorrow.
She'll go by *Kājitalā* to her husband's home.
While picking *Kāji*-flowers I found a garland
And danced like Sitaram with jingling arms and ankles.
Bend your body and dance, Sitaram!
And have a mouthful of raw rice to eat.
Raw rice makes his tongue dry as wood.
For a drink of water let's hurry to Tripurni Ghat.
There at Tripurni Ghat floats a pair of fish:
The priest took one, but who took the other?
Shouldn't I marry his sister for *oṛ*-flowers?
The gathering of *oṛ*-flowers brought about the noon.
Right at midday then shall I marry his sister. (tr.)

There is little logical order here. Connected by a thin thread of context, unconnected images appear without rhyme or reason, with no discrimination whatever, just as would happen in the sparkling consciousness of a child. This is the general characteristic of Bengali nursery rhymes. Some of these, however, offer impressions of forgotten incidents, relics of lost history. The Marhattas, for instance, made inroads into Bengal during the 18th century. Their plunders were a nightmare for a peace-loving people. Even today hundreds of mothers croon to their babies:

There goes my boy to sleep, the village is quiet
Since the *Bargis* (Marhatta plunderers) have invaded the land.
Sparrows have eaten up the rice, where are the means to pay taxes?
Gone is the rice, gone are betel leaves, how now to fend for taxes?
Why not wait a while? We've planted garlics.

The days of *Bargi* troubles have gone by, but memory lingers in such anonymous rhymes without bitterness. They enchant the young and the old alike with hypnotic rhythms and voices. The composers were certainly unlettered poor people, and most likely there were pre-Aryan *Kols* also among them. Probably that is why Bengali and tribal nursery rhymes resemble each other in a surprising manner.

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Themes and images are occasionally common, and the metre is the same.

This last point needs to be emphasized. Bengali metrical pattern is based on the Bengali speech habit which has some non-Aryan characteristics allied to that of the *Kols*. In *dhāmāli* (forceful) or lācāṛi (dancing) folk metres each pause consists of four syllabic *moras* (mātrā: the minimum unit of measure in quantitative verse) having a strong stress on the first syllable of the pause. This rhythm is Bengal's own and has no link with Sanskrit or *Prākṛt* metres. This is the reverberation of a popular cant or catchword of the *mādal* (drum), generally used for tribal dance. A close examination of the folk-songs and nursery rhymes of the Santals and other *Kol* tribes will convince one where the origin of Bengali folk metre lies.

Bengali Illustration

Ṕutumonige / ḿeye
bar diba / ćheye
kon gāyer / bar
Ńimāi sar / kārer betā / pālki ber / kār

Oh, my daughter Putumoni
I shall bring you a groom.
From which village is the groom?
He is the son of Nimai Sarkar. Now make the palki (palanquin) ready. (tr.)

Santali Illustration

é, sim / śim
de busāk / ḿe
Ḿurgi ko / ḿiju'k kana / ḋyoṛ bāgi / ám.

Oh hen, hen
Lay an egg
The Bargis are coming, otherwise I shall go away leaving you behind. (tr.)

This folk metre was strictly avoided by the sophisticated poets who created old Bengali literature. The Bengali speech habit, however, caused them to evolve a composite metrical norm which is a mixture of indigenous syllabic and *Prākṛt* metres. This composite metre, used both in folk and 'art' literature, is known as *Payār*.

Folk-songs (Lok Saṅgīt). Bengal is also famous for her folk-songs, the variety of their music and themes corresponding to various geographical corners of the land. Almost every family or community activity has its corresponding song. If the theme is love it refers usually to Krishna and Radha. Folk painters (*patuās*) in the western fringe of the state have their *patuā* songs. Various other folk-songs are called *bhādu*, *tusu*, *jhumur*, *sakhi* and *bāṅdnā*. In the northern regions they have *gambhirā*, *bhāoāiā* and *chatkā*. *Ālkāp*, *rotān*, *pāñcāli*, *ceṅcrā* can be heard in the middle parts of Bengal. Apart from these there are *sāri*, *jāri* and *bhātiāli* songs. The musical pattern of *jhumur*, *bhāoāiā* and *ghāt* may significantly differ, but in each case the theme is love.

Spiritual Songs. Strangely moving spiritual songs of the *bāuls* are treasured in Bengal for their music and poetic excellence. Probably derived from the Sanskrit word *bātul*, meaning mad, or affected by winds, a *bāul* is a type of mendicant religious singer. With only the wind as his home, he wanders from village to village celebrating God in ecstatic songs which he himself composes. His hair and beard are long and matted. His song is accompanied by a one-stringed instrument (*ek-tārā*) made from a gourd. Traces of Sufi Islam, of Tantric Buddhism, sometimes even of Chaitanya Vaishnavism can be found in *bāul* songs. As spiritual expressions, these songs are neither 'gross' nor 'concrete', as Tagore points out in *Religion of Man*, 'nor metaphysical in their rarified transcendentalism.... It speaks of an intense yearning of the heart for the divine which is in man and not in the temple.'

In the monthly journal *Pravāsī*, Tagore edited and published a collection of these songs, and he had high esteem for the *bāul* guru Lalan Phakir. As a matter of fact quite a number of his own songs were modelled on the *bāul* songs. Edward C. Dimock of the University of Chicago noticed a streak of the *bāul* in Tagore. Here are a few representative *bāul* songs in Dimock's translation:

(i) A song by 'Madan Bāul'
The path is hidden by the temple and the mosque,
and though I hear your call, O God, I cannot find the way
for against me stand my guru and *mursid*....
Your worship, when divided, dies,
and on your gate are many locks—
purāṇa, kurān, *tasbi*, *mālā*—
this outward show makes Madan weep in sorrow. (tr.)

(ii) A song by Gagan Harkarā
O when shall I find him who is the man of my heart?
I have lost him, and in my search I have wandered far and near.
Because of him, that moon of my heart, my mind distracted....
but when I find him, my mind will be filled with peace, and my eyes with tears of joy....
O where is this hiding place? I cannot search him out,
and my cup of sorrow overflows. (tr.)

(iii) A song by Lālan Phakir.
I have never seen him,
though he is my neighbour, dwelling in a mirrored city near my house.

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For around that city is a moat,
bottomless, endless, without a means to reach the farther shore.

My mind yearns to see him,
but I can never reach his city....
That neighbour and his neighbour Lalan
Live in a single place, yet are a thousand leagues apart.
(tr.)

Festival and Work Songs. *Tusu* is a festival in worship of a goddess, on the last day of *Pauṣ* (December—January), generally observed with great enthusiasm by Bengali-speaking tribes and lower caste Hindus of the south-west frontier of West Bengal. For a whole month before the festival day women become inebriated with *tusu* songs which are generally on love, on social problems, or on mythological subjects. *Maiśāl* songs of north Bengal, on the other hand, are work-songs. To make their work lively, the *maiśāls* (buffalo-boys, of various castes who graze cattle when they are not used in fields) sing these songs while grazing the cattle in forests. Md Mansuruddin (*Hārāmaṇi*, 8 vols., 1930), Asutosh Bhattacharya (*Lok Saṅgīt Ratnākar*, 4 vols., 1966) and others have made remarkable collections of the varieties of Bengali folk-songs.

Patuā Songs. The scroll painters of south-west Bengal demonstrate their paintings rolled in bamboo sticks along with characteristic *patuā* songs. The origin of this type of singing is hidden in the remote past. Bana's *Harṣacarita* (ch. 4) and *Mudrārākṣasa* (8th century) mention *patuās* and their art of singing. As each painting is unwound, generally depicting interpretations of mythological stories, the accompanying song explains the theme. Generally the paintings illustrate a condensed version of the Ramayana, Radha-Krishna legends and social problems, but there is a link between the Hindu and tribal systems of *Pat* painting. The *Kols*, for instance, use to this day a kind of scroll painting as a part of their traditional ceremonies, and some maintain that the Yama of *Yam-pats* (Yama paintings) was actually adopted from *Mārāṅg Buru* (The Supreme God) of the tribal people who punishes man's soul for sins committed in life. The Yama appears even in Islamic Gazi-pats (scroll paintings on Gazi), as can be seen in the following lines:

Messengers of Yama and Kāla stand on the left and right,
Between them is the seated King Yama.
And such is the might of the Gāzi that
by Gāzi's holy name we shall reach the other shore.

It has also been suggested that from these *patuā* songs evolved the *Maṅgal* poems of the medieval period and Krttibas probably took episodes not to be found in Valmiki from this indigenous source. Gurusaday Datta in his *Patuā Saṅgīt* (1939) mistakenly thought that this art was dying out. In Midnapore district, however, this kind of singing demonstration is still the primary occupation of a number of folk painters. They have only added to their repertoire today with songs on social problems, unconventional love-affairs, famous murder cases, even on flood havocs or family planning. It is, therefore, very much a living folk-art today.

Bāromāsī. Though *Bāromāsī* (Twelve Months) form of poetry occurs in sophisticated Bengali literature right from the 15th century, folk *bāromāsīs* probably predate these compositions and are sung to this day in the countryside. They describe the lamentation and longings of a deserted woman through the twelve months of the year. In western fringes they are still popular particularly among the Bengali-speaking tribes.

Gitikas (Ballads)

Another important form of folk literature is *Gītikā* or legends in verse usually based on some romantic secular love affair ending in tragedy. One such popular story is that of 'Chandrabati'. Dwija Bangsi Das the famous poet's only daughter Chandrabati is in love with a young Brahmin. He, however, loves a Muslim girl and converts to Islam to marry her. Chandrabati's disappointment forms the gist of a famous folk legend. Dineschandra Sen collected some legends with the help of Chandrakanta De and published them as *Maimansiṅgha Gītikā* (I) and *Pūrba Baṅga Gītikā* (II—IV) between 1923 and 1932. The love described is between man and woman from dissimilar castes. *Karuṇarasa* (pathos) abounds in old Bengali literature, but for tragedy one must turn to these folk ballads. For all the personal sacrifice involved, these romantic affairs end in stark tragedy. The Czech scholar Zbavital has observed in *Bengali Folk Ballads from Mymensingh* (Calcutta University, 1963): 'It is the only section of the old literature in which man, free from religious enclosures, can be clearly seen, and in which his natural rights on joys and sorrows, on hopes and desperations are acknowledged with respect.' It is also important to note that the true protagonists in most cases are female characters who struggle for their love, suffer and die. Some of these figures are noble characters indeed.

One should also mention *Brata Kathās* and *Pāñcālis* (story in verse generally on gods and goddesses; derived from 'Pācāli' meaning footstep or dance) in this account of folk-poetry. *Brata* is a semi-religious rite observed by women in the villages in which priests have no part to play. A story is narrated at the end of the ceremony glorifying the goddess for whom the rite is observed. The narrator is generally an elderly woman of the family or a woman

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story-teller. Prodyote Kumar Maitya in his study on the *Manasā* cult (1966) has suggested that the simple narratives remind one of fairy-tales. Verse *Brata Kathās* are now available as products of nondescript publishers. These religious folk-tales have also been claimed to be the sources of medieval Mangal poems. Longer *Brata Kathās* take the form of *Pāñcālis* sung by singers on village platforms surrounded by listeners.

Oral Tales

Equally impressive are the folk-tales of Bengal of which the earliest collection in translation was published from London in 1883 by an Indian Christian priest, Rev. Lal Behari Dey as *Folk-tales of Bengal*, though a decade before that G. H. Damant had started the study of these tales in his *Indian Antiquary* (1872). Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar (1877–1957) published *Thākurmār Jhuli* (Grandmother's Bag) and other companion volumes with these stories from 1907 onwards. Upendrakishore Roychoudhury (Upendrakiśor Roycaudhuri, 1863–1915) also collected beautiful folk-tales in prose for children. Some of these tales resemble those of the tribal people, especially the *Kols*. Some Rajasthani folk-tales also can be traced in Bengal owing probably to the migration of these through traders and invaders. The stories are generally about princes and princesses, she-demons guarding deserted palaces, flying horses, and wise birds with the power to foresee events and warn human beings. The characters have beautiful names such as 'Keśabati' (the long-haired one), 'Śānkhamālā' (the one fair like a conch), 'Dūdhkumār' (young prince with milk-white body), etc. Such a story narrates the adventures of a prince in unknown lands beyond endless rivers in quest of the forgotten princess with long billowy hair. The telling of such stories is also an art which unfortunately is gradually dying out with the impact of an industrial way of life. Some folk-tales are very common among the Santals and other Adibasi people. Here is one such story.

Once, five brothers killed their only sister Champa in a forest while taking her to her in-laws' house. They drank her sweet blood mixed with pot herbs and prepared a broth with her flesh. They all took an equal share but the youngest brother hid his portion in a pool. Suddenly a beautiful lotus grew from it. One day, her father-in-law, while passing by the pond saw the flower and went to pluck it. But the flower asked him not to break the stalk. Recognizing Champa in the flower, he restored her to human form with his magic powers and turned the wicked brothers to stone.

Proverbs and Riddles (Prabad, Dhandha)

Proverbs form another living branch of folk literature. These brief popular epigrams expressing the taste and pragmatic experience of the people first began to be collected by Western missionaries. Rev. William Morton published a collection of more than 800 proverbs in 1832 in *Dṛṣṭānta Bākya Saṅgraha* (Collection of Illustrative Sentences). Then followed Rev. Long's *Pravādmālā* (Proverbs) in 3 volumes (1868–72), Captain T. H. Lewin's *Hill Proverbs of the Inhabitants of Chittagong Hill Tracts* (1878), and another collection of Bengali and Hindi proverbs by Kanailal Ghosal (1889). Finally appeared the monumental compilation, *Bāṅglā Prabād* (1945) by S. K. De which contains some 10,000 proverbs with an exhaustive introduction. Many of these proverbs are current in daily use, and a number of these have been contributed by poets like Bharatchandra (18th century) and Rabindranath Tagore (20th century).

The study of Bengali riddles started with Nabinchandra Datta who published one hundred riddles in a journal called *Bāmā Bodhinī* in 1893. Folklorists give some importance to the study of riddles, and Asutosh Bhattacharya has discussed the riddles thoroughly in his book *Bāṅglā Loksāhitya* (Folk Literature of Bengal, vol. I, 1961). Even now there is a custom in West Bengal of asking riddles at the wedding ceremony. Some lower caste people would not even allow the groom's party to enter the village without first solving riddles put to them. This adds to the general merriment by making a smart and dexterous man appear stupid. There is a popular belief that riddles were first invented by the poet Kalidasa. Riddles by village wits are still passed as riddles of Kalidasa, e.g.

Something is glittering under a bush
Under that glittering, something is hissing
Under that hissing, something is prattling.
Oh Kalidas! What is it? Say in a word.

Answer: man's face. (bush: hair; glittering: eyes; hissing: nose; prattling: mouth.)

Folk-drama (Loknāṭya)

The convention of folk-drama is very old in Bengal. Sri Chaitanya (1485–1533) was fond of folk-drama and he himself is said to have taken part in some Radha-Krishna plays. Folk-dramas may be divided into two main groups: (1) Those which are purely musical in structure. Those with the story of Radha-Krishna in several parts are very popular for the quality of their characteristic songs. Since often young boys and girls take part in these performances they are also known as 'Bālak Saṅgīt' (Children's Songs). A few years back in south-west Bengal a musical drama, *Lalitā Pālā*, drew much attention. In it the Krishna legend was mixed with traditional history of the Sabara tribe. The story depicts how a fraudulent Brahmin from Puri indu-

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Lalita, a beautiful daughter of an old Savara in the forest, to stealthily remove the image of Nilmadhava from her father's cottage to the Puri temple. (b) The other type of folk-drama has a mixed form of songs and dialogue in prose. The story in most cases is that of Rama or Krishna, and the performance is known as *jātrā*.

Jātrā is the oldest living folk theatre in Bengal. Actors use colourful costumes, and have their special conventions of acting the parts. Even female characters are acted by men, though this custom is rapidly changing in modern *jātrā* performances. Contemporary *jātrā* plays often use secular themes of romantic, sentimental versions of historical episodes. *Jātrā* plays on Hitler or Stalin are not unknown (see article on Drama—Bengali).

There has been a revival of the interest in *jātrā* performances in recent years. Big professional groups operate in a particular area in Calcutta (Chitpore) from where they give regular performances in cities and villages. Important actors and actresses from the film and theatre world participate in these performances and earn fabulous sums as fees. According to old conventions the performances take place on slightly raised platforms around which cluster the audience. A full performance usually takes the better part of a night.

The folk-drama is the origin of modern Bengali opera, and probably it inspired Rabindranath Tagore to compose his sophisticated musical plays (gītināṭya).

Impact on Art Literature

The impact of folk literature on art literature can hardly be minimized. Analysis of the art of Bengali versification has shown that the character of prosody has been moulded by folk prosody to a large extent. The works of Rabindranath Tagore reveal profound assimilation of characteristic folk elements of literary creation. In the post-Tagore era poets and authors are taking deep and varied interest in folk literature. Jibanananda Das, for instance, used in his poetry, particularly in *Rūpasī Bāṅglā* (Lovely Bengal), evocative images from folk-poetry. Rupai Samanta, in *Lok Saṅskṛti Journal* (October 1975), has discussed this impact of folk literature on modern Bengali poetry.

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Gujarati

PUSHKER CHANDERVAKER

Folklore is a huge and multibranched tree with three principal branches, viz. the verbal, the partly verbal and the non-verbal. The verbal and partly verbal parts of folklore and folk-plays belong to oral or folk literature. Throughout the world, oral or folk literature is the primal literature of people who sang its songs and told its stories without knowing who the authors were. In fact, oral literature has no individual authorship; it is the mass product of unknown authors.

Folk or oral literature is simple, effective and heart-warming; it is unassuming and undecorative. Its salient features are:

(i) It is oral, being transferred orally from one generation to the other. Oral transfer is through voice or musical instruments, *Nā koi gānv binā gīto ke* (No village without a folk-song). Oral transmission also includes transfer by customary demonstration and imitation.

(ii) It is traditional, being passed on repeatedly in a relatively fixed or standard form, and circulating among members of a particular group. But slight changes take place here and there in transmission, though without loss of structure or form. Different versions of the same folk-songs, folk-tales and folk-plays are therefore obtainable. 'A story, proverb, or other text is living folklore as long as it continues orally in different traditional variations' (see J. H. Brunvand, *The Study of American Folklore*).

(iii) Many folk-songs are the creation of groups. The time, the place and the circumstances of such creations remain unknown.

(iv) 'Most folklore tends to become formularized; and is expressed partly in cliches' (J. H. Brunvand). Simple set phrases, lines, figures of speech and motifs are repeated in oral literature.

These essential features of oral literature are found in Gujarati also.

Gujarat has many dialects, such as Kacchi, Jādeji, Hālāri, Sorāthi, Gohilwādi, Zālāwāri, the Coastal dialect, Bhili (tribal dialects), Charotari or the dialect of central Gujarat, and Surati, the dialect of South Gujarat. The forests of the Dāngs district abound with tribes which have their own dialects known as the Dāngis and Gāmit. The oral literature of Gujarat, Saurashtra and Kacch is found in all these tongues. The northern and eastern parts of the state are populated by different tribes and races which came there by sea or land from outside and settled in Gujarat. These races and tribes possess a wealth of folk literature.

Dohās. Hemchandracharya, a Jain monk of the 12th century, was the first to collect the folk literature of his time. While collecting *Dohās* (a form of metrical composition) for the first Gujarati grammar, he came across one which runs:

> While driving away crows suddenly she saw her lord.
> Seeing him, down fell half of the bangles and the remaining half broken down! (tr.)

This *Dohā* still survives in popular use in Gujarat. Gujarati folk literature is very rich in *Dohās*. These are sung and recited by people when they are at work. A carter will sing while driving his bullock-cart, a herdsman while tending his cattle. In modern Gujarati, *Dohā* literature is itself described in the form of a *Dohā*, thus:

> *Dohā* is the tenth veda,
> It is piercing to those who understand it;
> The birth-pangs of a mother,
> Will never be understood by a barren lady! (tr.)

Dohās hold an honourable and important position in Gujarati folk literature.

Medieval Folk Literature

Medieval Gujarati literature is full of the elements of folklore but very few Gujarati scholars have investigated this precious treasure. The epic poems of Premanand (1636–1734), the *Cehāpas* (a metrical form) of Akha Bhagat (1615–75), the *Padas* of Dayaram (1777–1852) and the *Rāmāyaṇ* by Girdhar (1787–1852) contain considerable folkloristic material. *Vasant Vilās*, a narrative poem of the 14th century has been judged a folk creation.

Kavi Dalapatram (Daḷapatrām, 1820–98), while working on *Kāvyadohan* (1890) collected a few folk-songs of Gujarat though he had no clear idea of the genre. The collection of folk-songs, however, was seriously undertaken only by Kavi Narmadashanker (Narmad, 1833–86) in the latter part of the 19th century. His lead was followed by Mahipatram Rupram, Ranjitram Vavabhai and others, but none of them had a scientific outlook. Collection of folk-songs attained

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a new dimension only when Jhaverchand Meghani (Jhavēr-cand Mēghāṇī, 1897–1947) began collecting them. His work on folklore in Gujarat is unique.

In recent times, only a handful of scholars like Pushker Chandervaker and Madhubhai Patel have undertaken to the serious collection of the folk-songs of Gujarat. The Folklore Committee of Gujarat State has published twelve collections of folk-songs titled *Gujarāti Lok Sahityamālā* vols. I to XII (Garlands of Gujarati Folk-songs). This is a noteworthy work.

Folk-songs. Folk literature is kept alive; while celebrating marriages, folk-songs add charm and beauty to marriage ceremonies in villages. In Gujarat, the hill-tribes dance and sing to the accompaniment of simple instruments when they celebrate a marriage:

Oh dandy mother, she grazes her herd
on her feet are shoes studded with gems!
Wealthy women of Kempa village,
came to see her! (tr.)

A folk-song is a rhythmic lyrical poem representing the social, cultural and spiritual life of the people. The songs sung by the Bhils of the Aravalli hills, such as the one from which the lines above are quoted, have these qualities. So have these lines from a Padhar folk-song sung by a love-lorn young maiden:

Behind my hut, a flute echoed,
My soul is excited and churned
Oh my dear, take a glance at me! (tr.)

Gujarati folk-songs are full of sentiment and emotion. They express love, sorrow, happiness, misery, mirth, etc. in a style simple and musical. The deepest emotions and sentiments are expressed in the mourning songs. A few lines from one such song are given below:

Long are the leaves of the *Āmbali* (tamarind) tree,
Leaves of *Khajur* (date) tree for a she-deer, hāya hāya!
(alas, alas)
A deer grazing pearls is cut off,
Separated is a she-deer, hāya, hāya!
A swan eating his morsel is hit by an arrow
Separation is felt by a she-swan, hāya, hāya! (tr.)

In addition to death songs sung by women, fertility songs are also sung by them. These songs, accompanying a folk-dance known as the *Ghodo Khundavo* are ceremonial songs and are called *Kholo Bharanun*. A pregnant woman craves for a son and sings:

Oh mother Rannade, gift me a male-child,
Placing his feet tenderly in my lap! (tr.)

Gujarati is rich in folk-songs that describe the different marriage rites. Some of them are sublime in nature and spirit, others symbolic. When the song sings of Lord Shiva washing his dhotis and Parvati going to fetch water, it is the bridegroom and the bride about whom the song is sung. There is a felicity of expression in Gujarati folk-songs. For instance, in one song it is said, *Laving keri lākadiye Rāme Sitāne Māryā Jo* (Sita is beaten by Rama with a stick of a clove plant). Thus is Rama's anger described.

To women, folk-songs are often ritual songs. The day begins for the Gujarati woman with a ritualistic song. Having cleaned her teeth with an Indian brush made of the thin green sticks of a neem tree, she bows her head towards the east, praying to the Sun God and sings:

Tearing off the Indian brush,
Sins would be washed off,
Cows are released from sheds,
Opened are streets of religion!
Oh, Sun God, help us,
Help those, who shelter under you,
Thousands of our sins be pardoned!

While bathing she sings:

Took bath in holy Ganges, Jamuna, Saraswati, Narmada,
Gomati, etc.

Young maidens celebrate *Gauri-Vṛta* (the worship of Parvati) with songs and dance. While going to the river-bank or pond, they sing:

Oh Gorma, Gorma re, Gorma, Gorma re,
Her Lord is pink orange-coloured,
goes to the river-bank,
for her bath!

At a marriage ceremony all the rites are accompanied by folk-songs. The send-off to the bride-daughter is a very tragic scene that is accompanied by a folk-song of sorrowful tune. The bride requests the bridegroom's party:

Please stop a while, let me take words of advice;
Now what words and utterance of advice!
O! affectionate lady, now being married,
Let us move to our land! (tr.)

And the bride's parents' party sings:

Lock the apartment of our dear daughter,
Our dear daughter leaves for her father-in-law's! (tr.)

At her husband's house, the bride feels isolated and disturbed because he has received a letter asking him to serve the king. She sings:

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Standing on the eastern gate,
A letter of Raj to serve, he got;
On its border, hundreds of salutes mentioned,
But in the middle, an invitation from the Raj to serve!
(tr.)

And adds:

There flashes lightning in the sky,
And it rains slowly, O my love!
How could you go to serve,
I will not allow you to go to serve! (tr.)

In medieval Gujarat, as in other parts of the country, this was the uniform pattern of life. The husband had to leave his home to serve his king as soon as the marriage was over. The wife tries to forget the pangs of separation by involving herself in religious rituals, such as the worship of Rannade, and in dances such as *Rāsadās* and *Garbās*. Gujarat is rich in dance songs about Krishna and the Gopis. A *Rāsa*, a dance song sung by a chorus of women and sometimes accompanied by the clapping of hands or sticks and the thumping of feet, goes thus:

Oh Kan (Lord Krishna) to Mathura you had been,
But now where have you been?
Where did you lose your crown? (tr.)

Gujarati women are known all over the country for their *Rāsa* and *Garbā* dances. Padhār tribeswomen have their own *Rāsa* and *Garbā* dances. Their voices are melodious, musical and extremely pleasing to the ear. The women of the tribal Bhils, Dhanakas, Nayakas and Rathanas also have their own dance songs, each tribe having different rhythms of *Rāsa* and *Garbās*.

Women in rural areas sing while working. Here is a harvest song:

Oh Gori had been to the farm of Kāng to reap *kāng* (a kind of grain)
Standing and sitting, reap *kāng*;
Had been to the farm of Kāng to reap *kāng!*

Gujarati folk literature is also rich in work songs such as plantation songs and boating songs. Boatmen compose them extempore. So their songs are similar to nursery rhymes. Boatmen's songs are known as *Abāvāni*, or *Bhāmani*—songs of the water.

Ballads

Ballads are many in Gujarati, though only a few have been collected and published. Some of these ballads are dance songs for both men and women. While singing ballads and dancing, the participants are accompanied by drums and *shahnais*. When women observe ritual vigils at night, they sing longer ballads. The themes of Gujarati ballads are mythological, historical or social. Ballads about Bharathari, Gopichand, Laxman-Swoon, Shiv-Bhiladi and Sita and the golden deer are very popular. *Rāsadās* about outlaws such as Kadu Makrani, Meerkhan, Jumalo, etc. are sung by professional singers. Venibhai and Gopi Nayak, local historical heroes, are celebrated in song by women on moonlit nights in the villages of South Gujarat. Social ballads, such as *Bhāi-Bahen* (A Brother and a Sister), the pastoral Ballads of *Maṣāri* and *Sāyabo* (A Wife and a Husband) and *Pātaḷi Parmār* (The Beautiful Woman) are popular. So is a ballad on Madhavav, a step-well in Wadhwan, a town in Saurashtra. This ballad, sung by women has sacrifice as its theme. This theme is also echoed in a ballad about a lake named Shamela in Vadnagar, a town in north Gujarat. When the Shamela lake was being dug there was no sign of water at all, so they sang:

For twelve long years, the Shamelā lake is being dug,
But no drop of water has been found, Oh Ras Rajavi!
(tr.)

Then it is narrated, the Shamela lake demanded an offering. A fortune-teller was invited by the headman and he advised that 'The eldest son and his wife, with a young child in her lap, should be offered, for water in Shamela lake.' And so the three were offered to the lake. When they reached the bottom of the lake, at the twelfth step, the lake flowed over with water. In eastern Gujarat, the ballad of Bhadra-Kali is sung.

Folk-tales

Folk-tales are stories that are part of the folk tradition. They also educate the folk mind. They are part of folk life from childhood. Fairy-tales are a source of enjoyment for youngsters. When girls grow up, they listen to ritual tales (or *Vṛata-kathās*); growing boys attend meetings *dayarās* at which folk-tales are narrated by professional story-tellers. Professional story-tellers travel from village to village during summer, when the villagers are free from their work and tell stories of love and heroism. Some of these story-tellers are genealogists, who tell heroic tales of the dead and respected forefathers of the villagers. The people of Gujarat specially like folk-tales of love, the heroic deeds of their forefathers and sacrifice (*sṛṅagār*, *vīr* and *śānta rasās*). Folk-tales about wells, lakes and ponds, rivers and hills, local deities and saints are also popular, but their appeal is limited.

Some individual efforts have been made to collect folk tales during the last 50 years. These have resulted in the publication of several books of folk-tales, such as *Saurāṣṭ*

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ni Rāsdhār, vols. I to V, *Okhā Māndal ni Lok Kāthāo*, etc. containing the love stories of Sheni Vijanand, Odho Jām and Hothal Padamani, Ānalde-Devaro, Son-Halaman, Meh-Ujali, Jesal-Toral, Nag-Nagmati, etc. Among those who have collected folk-tales are the late Framji B. Patel, a Parsi gentleman, Hargovind Premshanker, Jhaverchand Meghani, Pushker Chandervaker and Gokuldas Raichura.

Adventure tales of the outlaws of Saurashtra and northern Gujarat are narrated by professional story-tellers from such tribes as the Bards, Chāranas, Bharathari, Mir, Turi, Rāval, Dhādhis, etc. Generally every village has its own local story-teller. Such story-tellers narrate folk-tales even while the villagers are working. Among the women, there are story-tellers who narrate fairy-tales on a summer night while the other women pick cotton. Professional story-tellers use stringed instruments such as the *sundari*, *rāvan haththo*, *sārangi* and *ekṭāro* while narrating folk-tales.

The land of Saurashtra, being a feudal territory, is full of stories of love and heroism. One such legend, that of Odho Jam and Hothal Padamani, is well known in Kacch as well as in Saurashtra. Hothal, foster-daughter of Sagan Nimagaro, used to put on a man's clothes and go to the hills to hunt. She called herself Hothal Nimagaro. Once, she attempted to take away the camels belonging to Bāmbhaniyā of Ghaluda village. She was helped in this adventure by Odho Jam, who had been banished from the capital by his brother. Fleeing together they could not bathe for eight days. Then, at last, they found a lake. When Hothal went to bathe, she did not notice Odho Jam watching from some distance. Odho was stunned to discover that his companion was a young woman. He immediately fell in love with her and asked her to become his life-partner. She agreed, on condition that Odho Jam did not reveal her identity. Thus they married, settled far from Jam's land and had two sons.

Odho Jam now began to feel homesick. When his family asked him why he felt unhappy, he said he wanted to go back to his own land. Hothal reminded him of the condition he had agreed to before their marriage and said she would go with him only if that condition was fulfilled. Odho Jam agreed and they left their sanctuary. Back in the capital they passed several happy days. But soon there were several inquiries about Hothal. In a moment of weakness, Odha Jam revealed her identity, breaking his vow. When Hothal came to know of this, she left her husband to go and live in the hills. But before she left, she promised her two sons that she would come back to attend their marriages. And she did.

This multi-motif tale, similar to the myth of Urvashi-Pururava, is a legend in Kacch. At certain places, *dohās* occur in this tale.

Proverbs and Riddles

A proverb is a terse didactic saying that has universal appeal. It belongs to folklore. Some Gujarati proverbs have their origins in fairy-tales, others in myths and legends. To some extent, even history can be traced with the help of proverbs, applying the principle of the geographic-historical method.

In Gujarati folk-life, proverbs play a considerable role in daily life. They are instruments to create laughter and sorrow to pass on wisdom from one person to another. Proverbs reflect the psychology of the people. There are proverbs of folk beliefs and superstitions, of laws and courts, of animals and birds, of trees and plants, of historical events, of household and farm-work, of weather and rain, of fruits and flowers. Gujarati folk literature has a treasure of such sayings which provide a complete picture of the life and people of Gujarat.

Gujarati proverbs are to be mainly found in prose, but some are in rhyme and in prosodic rhythms:

A healthy body is the first happiness,
A son, in the house, is the second,
Third is the meritorious wife;
And the last is the grain in the barn! (tr.)

Riddles are a very important and pleasurable pastime of the illiterate. It is said that riddles originated in Central Asia and penetrated these regions through classical Sanskrit. In form, they are often similar to rhymed poetry. They are traditional, metaphorical in form, entertaining in character and useful for the development of a witty and intellectual personality. During summer, when the heat keeps women and children indoors while picking cotton, they gather at one spot and make light of the work in telling riddles that are enjoyed.

In the folk-tales of Halaman Jethwa such riddles are set by the Princess Sonkunwari. There are plenty more in medieval Gujarati folk literature. They are all skilfully composed. Some riddles are in the form of a question, as follows:

Poser : Let us have flour from Lanka
Answer : Red cranes flew towards the desert,
Turned back, drinking water;
A crane lost his lip,
Brought flour from Lanka!

Another in couplet form, runs:

Born in winter and summer, and no more in the monsoon,
Neither a trunk nor a leaf, edible by all castes!
(*Answer*: Salt)

There are several collections of riddles now published as books. *Ukhānān*, a collection of riddles, is popular in Gujarat.

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Bhavāī or Folk-plays. *Bhavāī* is a kind of folk-play of Gujarat, which has its origin in the ritual ceremonies of Shakti Puja. It is said that 600 years ago, Asait Thakar composed 360 *veṣas* (folk-plays) of *bhavāī* but only 60 have survived. These *veṣas* can be classified into three categories:

(i) Mythological: Folk-plays of Rama-Ravan, Kan-Gopi, etc.
(ii) Historical: Jasmā Odan, Rānak Rekhengār, Sadharā Jesing, etc.
(iii) Social: Miyā Bibi, Kansāro, Bāwāji, etc.

These folk-plays serve two purposes, one didactic, the other entertainment. Social plays however, are always satirical. They abound in rhyme and are staged in villages at night, where they are popular with the farming community (Patels). There is, however, a common complaint that some of these folk-plays have become obscene and encourage vulgarity. Hence they are on the decline.

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Hindi

SATYENDRA

Hindi is the language of a vast area inhabited by a variety of people with various dialects and sub-dialects. The whole area is geographically bound by the Himalayan ranges in the North with snowy peaks and big lakes which give rise to various rivers going to the plains down below. In the plains, the Hindi region is closed up by Vindhya ranges in the south and interrupted by Aravali offshoots along with dense forests here and there.

In the context of literary history, the Hindi language is taken to comprise five sub-languages, viz. Western Hindi, Eastern Hindi, Rajasthani, Pahadi and Bihari together with their dialects numbering about fifteen. These variegated dialects abound in different shades of culture although the base is essentially the same throughout.

All this variety is vitally reflected in the folk literature of this region, and has undoubtedly made it very rich and colourful. The people of this area are fond of music on account of which the homes, streets, fields, forests, mountainous regions, industrial areas, all reverberate with melodious songs from dawn to midnight. They find an occasion for songs and other forms of folk literature every day and everywhere.

Ritual of Vṛatas

This love for folk-songs and folk-tales is intensified b religious beliefs which pervade the whole populatio whether educated or uneducated, primitive or civilize poor or rich, rural or urban. Religion links up many these songs and tales to ritualistic practices, which gi them a magical intonation. This is more true of the son accompanying rituals at various essential ceremonies su as childbirth, marriage, etc. Then there are calendaric fa and feasts which form a separate class by themselves. The fasts and festivals are observed in honour of some de nearly everyday throughout the year, for the prosper and well-being of all concerned in a family. The son which form a part of such ceremonies are naturally ritu istic and are accompanied by ritual tales, which, thou part of folklore, have attained a kind of religious sanct

Festivals and Folk Arts

In the Hindi area every pious occasion demands devotio display of skill; for example, on the occasion of a *Vrta*

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fast, the devotee is required to draw some linear sketch on the wall with sacred motifs particularly related to the tale of the deity of the day, e.g. the snakes will be painted, if it is *Nāga Pañcamī*. This ritual is accompanied by the narration of some relevant story along with songs. All these things put together form one compact ritual of a festival. This is one class of folk literature which is connected with ceremonies, fasts and festivals. There are folk-songs and folk-tales for nearly every ritual.

Ceremonial Songs

Narangphal. Among ceremonial songs, there are some songs which are remarkable for the structure and sentiments interwoven into them. One such remarkable song is that of *Nāraṅgphal* which is sung at the *dohada* or '*sādh*' ceremony celebrated in the 7th month of conception. It is believed that in this month, a pregnant woman craves for something and it is the duty of her husband or other relations to obtain the coveted object for her. In the song referred to above a pregnant woman craves to have *nāraṅgphal*, a kind of fruit, which is perhaps available at a place difficult to reach. The place is well protected and the fruit can be obtained after confronting some violent opposition requiring great valour and skill. The hero ultimately succeeds in bringing the fruit. The song opens with these words:

Je nau je das mās rājā
Rājkumāri garabh te
Nāraṅgphal māṁgiye

Now ninth and now tenth month
Princess running under pregnancy
and she demands a *nāraṅgphal*. (tr.)

The story is that when the hero reached the place, it was lit up with one hundred thousand lamps and as many ferocious dogs and sturdy soldiers were guarding it. When he reached there, lamps were extinguished and the dogs and soldiers fell asleep. The hero picked up one fruit but immediately the lamps were lit up again, and dogs and soldiers woke up. The hero was caught and produced before the authorities, who allowed him to take away the fruit for the special purpose. The most touching part of the song is where the relatives express their anxiety and worry for the hero and even his wife curses herself for having thrown her husband into the jaws of perils.

Childbirth. At the time of childbirth, the ceremonies continue for more than ten days and each day reverberates with songs of some kind or the other on *ḍholak* (a small drum) and *manjirās* (cymbals). Some of the songs containing folk-tales in their basic structures are really pathetic. One such song is inspired by the story of Sitā's banishment by Rama. The song begins with this strain:

'*Rāje, nanad bhāvaj dou baiṭhiye*

Sita and her sister-in-law are sitting together. Then, the sister-in-law insists that Sita should paint a portrait of Ravana. When Sita draws a sketch of Ravana, the sister-in-law shows it to her brother. Rama asks Lakshmana to take Sita away into the jungle and leave her there. Lakshmana obeys Rama. Sita luckily meets an ascetic who takes her to his hermitage. There, she gives birth to Kuśa. She sends a barber to Ayodhya with *rocana* (auspicious red powder) and instructs him that he should first give it to Daśaratha and then to Lakshmana, but he should avoid Rama. Next morning Rama sees the mark (*tilaka*) of *rocana* on the forehead of Lakshmana. Lakshmana informs that a son is born to Sita. On hearing this, the grief of Rama knows no bounds, and with Guru Vasiṣṭha and Lakshmana, he goes to escort Sita back to Ayodhya. She tells Vasiṣṭha that she cannot disobey him, and hence she will go ten steps only with him towards Ayodhya and then will enter the bosom of mother-earth.

About *nanad* (husband's sister) and *bhāvaj* (wife of *nanad*'s brother), there are many songs which depict their acrimony and conflict about the quality and amount of the gift which the former wants to extort from her brother's wife for blessing her child. This conflict quite often grows into bitterness, but ultimately the latter yields and gets profuse blessings for her child from the sister-in-law. Among a number of such songs one sizeable song is *Jagmohan Lūgarā*, which is about a precious cloth called *jagmohan*. It is a rare piece available with the in-laws of the child's father. The child's mother knows that if her sister-in-law learns that *jagmohan lūgarā* is with them, she will insist on having it as a gift. She, therefore, sends a messenger to her father's house quite secretly, but the sister-in-law learns about it and ultimately obtains the precious piece of cloth.

All these songs which are sung for ten to fifteen days regularly since the birth of a child can be roughly classified under the following categories: *Sohile, Janti, Chaṭhī* songs and *Jagmohan Lūgarā*. *Tagā* songs belong to a different category sung on the day of the christening ceremony: *Nāmakaraṇa-samskāra* songs.

Marriage Songs. The Hindi people celebrate marriage ceremony also with great enthusiasm. The houses of the bride and bridegroom resound with ritualistic songs, expressive of joy and merriment.

A very touching song describes the married sister's invitation to her brother to come with plentiful *bhāt* (ceremonial gift) on the occasion of her son's marriage. When she reaches her brother's house, she learns that her brother has already died. Her lamentations move the ghost of the brother which appears before her and promises to do the needful at the appropriate time—but instructs her not to

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put any piece of wood of *mahuā* tree for him. The ghost brother reaches there with lots of clothes and other gifts for his sister as well as her relations there. Everything goes on well with rejoicings, but when the turn comes for the brother to greet his sister, some cunning person puts a piece of wood of *mahuā* tree there. At this, the ghost immediately disappears changing the whole scene into a grim tragedy.

Marriage songs too are many in number and are sung for over a month. These normally belong to three categories. One of them comprises ritualistic songs which are supposed to have a sort of magic effect—songs imploring various deities and spirits to attend the ceremony and protect the members of the family from evil. One of these songs runs as follows:

Dharatī ke dimān khaṛe haiṁ
Phir kāhe kī samkhyā.

When the protector of the earth is standing by us, there is no occasion for apprehension. (tr.)

The second category of ritual songs describes the various functions which are to be performed and also describes who has to do what. These are essential songs, but do not have any touch of magic in them. They simply indicate the technique of performance.

The third category consists of songs which women are free to sing according to their own choice and pleasure.

Vigil Songs (Jāgaraṇa Gīta)

Apart from this class of folk literature, there is another which is related to a long ritual lasting for the whole night or nights and is conducted by a special class of people called *Ojhās* or *Bhopās* well-versed in the lore of gods and goddesses who when invited by them come and possess the body of a medium. This medium, man or woman, then dances to the tunes of musical instruments accompanied by ballads describing the feats and deeds of the god or goddess concerned. *Sohile* and *jas* are also sung. These songs are called *Jāgaraṇa Gīta* or *jāgar gīt* (vigil songs) and form a class by themselves.

Ballads

From these ceremonial songs, we proceed on to another category of songs, which are ballads—and are of two kinds. One kind consists of ballads which are the *Jāgar* or *Jāgaraṇa* songs. These are sung to keep the devotees wide awake, persuade the god to appear before them through a medium mostly an *Ojhā* and accept their offerings. These ceremonies are performed when a devotee has got some of his or her wishes fulfilled by the grace of the deity whom he or she wants to propitiate. Each deity has his or her team—consisting of instrumentalists and singers with one medium man to dance for the spirit. One such *Jāgaraṇa* ceremony which is quite in vogue is that of *Devī*, the mother-goddess. These *Devī Jāgaraṇas* are mostly performed during *navarātras*. These are celebrated during the months of *Āśvina* and *Caitra*. Their songs have long legends attached to them. One such legend is *Jagadevā ka Paṁvāṛā* (Jagadeva's heroic saga). Jagadeva is a staunch devotee of the mother-goddess and on demand offers his head, chopping it off with his own hands. The goddess is very pleased. She wants to plant back the head on Jagadeva's body. His wife, however, refuses to take back that head. She pleads that what has been given away to the goddess cannot be taken back. Then, by the grace of the mother-goddess another head comes out of the body of Jagadeva who becomes alive again.

Another such divinity is *Bhairojī*—the *Bhairava* form of Śiva. Yet another and quite important is Jāharpīr who is known as Guru Gōgā or Guggā also. He is considered to be a snake-god. The legendary ballad about him is very long and narrates his marvellous actions ever since he came into his mother's womb. There are some other hero-gods, whose *Paṁvāṛās* are sung with vigil and ritual dance. *Pābūjī kā Paṁvāḍā*, *Tejājī kā paṁvāḍā* are equally popular ballads. Another ballad known as *Bagḍāvat* is sung to propitiate hero-god Deva Nārāyaṇa.

In hilly regions of Garhwal and Kumāyuṇ there are many other gods and goddesses who are worshipped and are the subjects of various *Jāgar* songs. The god or goddess when pleased comes there and possesses a *pasavā* medium or the like. These *Jāgar* songs which are of the legendary ballad type are of various categories:

(i) About Nāgarājā or Nāgarāya, who is Lord Kṛṣṇa of the plains.

(ii) About Ghaṇṭākarṇa, a Yakṣa who is very widely worshipped as Kṣetrapāla in every village.

(iii) About Niraṅkāra, a god whose legend is based upon the legend of Saint Redās, who sends his present to Gaṅga through Brahmā and she in turn sends one gold bracelet to Redās.

(iv) *Pāṇḍava Vārtā* is also very popular in the *Jāgar* series which sings of the various exploits of the Pāṇḍavas, their mother Kuntī and their wife Draupadī. *Pāṇḍava* dance is a dance of great variety. Each one of the Pāṇḍavas, Kuntī and Draupadī also are invoked in these songs.

(v) About the goddess Nandā who is none other than Pārvatī—daughter of Himavanta (the Himalaya) and wife of Śiva. There are some other gods and goddesses also whose *Jāgar* is celebrated with legendary songs.

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Popular Folk-epics

Besides these religious ballads, there are many other legends which are sung by special bards who are masters of this art. These epic-ballads have no religious content but are so fascinating in themselves that people listen to them with rapt attention for hours together.

One such epic-ballad is *Ḍholā*, which relates a pre-Mahabharata folk-tale connected with Nala and Damayanti. The *Ḍholā* sung in Uttar Pradesh, however, begins with the anxiety of Rājā Pirtham for want of a child. Rājā Pirtham and his spouse Mañjhā receive the blessings of a saint who is pleased with their devotion. When Mañjhā becomes pregnant, the king suspects some foul play and orders that she be put to death. But the executioners take pity and leave her in the jungle where she gives birth to Nala. A great business magnate happens to come that way and adopts Mañjhā as his daughter. When grown up Nala goes with his maternal uncles in ships on business errands. During the journey, he is left by his maternal uncles in a lonely island, where he kills a demon called Bhaumāsura and marries Motinī, his daughter. Nala and Motinī stay on the shore of the island in the hope that some ship might pass that side. Luckily the ships of his maternal uncles come there on their return journey and Nala and Motinī are taken on board the ship. Now, the uncles have their eye on the beautiful damsel and her wealth, and so they get rid of Nala by throwing him into the deep sea. Nala goes down into the abyss of the sea where he reaches the palatial abode of the serpent-king Vāsukī. Vāsukī makes friends with Nala and takes him to the coast, where Nala thwarts the mischief of his maternal uncles and gets his wife back. Later King Pirtham recognizes him as his son and receives his mother back with great honour. In due course, Nala succeeds his father as a king. Then follows Nala's marriage to Damayanti, their separation and reunion. They get a son, who is named Ḍholā and while yet a child he is married to Mārū. In due course, Śani leaves Nala who regains his kingdom. When Mārū and Ḍholā grow up, Mārū sends many messages which are intercepted by another lady. 'Ḍholā-Mārū' is a very well-known theme, popular throughout the Hindi region. The Hindi folk-epic *Ḍholā* contains many interesting episodes and later included the story of Kiśan Singh, cousin of Ḍholā. This folk-epic is sung by a special class of bards.

Ālhā is another great folk-epic which sings of the heroic feats of Ālhā, his brother Ūdal and cousin Malkhān, who were Banāfars in the military services of the Candel kings of Mahovā. Fifty-two battles fought and won are related in the ballad which is full of heroic sentiments, marvellous events, magical fights, and various other exploits. Published versions of this legend are also available in the market, but the song sung by the bards has quite a different kind of charm. Some decades back *Ālhā* was used by officers to inspire people to join military services.

There is another legendary ballad called *Lorikī* or *Lor Canainī* which is popular in the eastern regions of the Hindi area. Lorik is a local hero, a god of the Ahīrs or milkmen. He is also a very brave man with matchless physical strength. *Lorikī* is apparently a tale of love between Candā and Lorik. Candā is married but she has forsaken her husband and has fallen in love with Lorik, who is also married to Mainā. Lorik elopes with Candā, confronts many odds and in the end both of them return home. The story was popular in the Middle Ages and a poet Mullā Dāūd wrote *Candāyana* on this theme. This is the first Premagāthā (love-ballad) of Hindi, and though basically a tale of love, is full of heroic marvels performed by Lorik.

In the Kumayun region there is a very popular ballad named *Mālū Sāhī*. The tale is short and can be summed up as follows: There are two ladies who have no children. They go to a temple where they receive the blessings of the deity. One who was a queen gets a son, while the other who was the wife of a great business-magnate gets a daughter. The son is named Mālū Sāhī and the daughter Rājulī. Rājulī's mother betrothed her to a young man whom Rājulī did not like. She wanted Mālū Sāhī. After marriage, her husband began to torture her, but Rājulī managed to escape and made her way to Raṅgīlī Bairāt, the capital city of Mālū Sāhī. On the way many vicious men tried to entice her but she was successful in getting rid of them, and reached Bairāt. She went into the chamber of Mālū Sāhī, where he was sleeping. Rājulī put a letter on his couch and went away to her mother. On reading the letter Mālū Sāhī became a *jogī* in quest of Rājulī and after wandering about for long ultimately reached the place of Rājulī. Rājulī by her magic turned him into a little insect and carefully kept him in her hair-locks. Later on, he was brought back to his human form. Seemingly Rājulī's mother also yielded to her wish, but later poisoned Mālū Sāhī who died. This event was seen in a dream by Mālū Sāhī's mother who, taking with her a large force, and the *yogis* of the twelve sects proceeded towards Rājulī's place. In the meantime, Rājulī's mother had instigated Rājulī's husband who also collected a large force and marched towards their city. The *yogi guru* of Mālū Sāhī revived him and turned him into a parrot, who immediately flew over to Rājulī and informed her of every incident. There was a fierce battle between the two forces. Finally, Mālū Sāhī was victorious and took Rājulī with him to Bairāt. This is also a very popular ballad in the northern regions of the Hindi area.

Another popular ballad is *Ramolā* of Kumayun and Garhwal. *Ramolā* contains tales of seventeen persons interwoven loosely together and related in some way or the other to Krishna. This ballad brings to life those seven children who were born before Krishna and were put to death by Kamsa. Barmī Kaṁval or Brahma Kumār is one of them. Krishna rubs his body and produces a *bhaṁvar* or

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bee and sends a message through it to Brahma Kumār asking him to go to Jaulātāl in Tibet and bring *causar* from a lady named Motīmālā. Surajū Kuṁvar is another brother and the names of other brothers are also given in the list of Nāga genealogy of Sem-Mukhem. Krishna is the king of Nāgas or Serpents—according to this legend.

Sidhuvā or Siddhi Ramolā, Budhvā or Buddhi Ramolā are two brothers of Devaki. They are great heroes with a magical power and help Krishna in getting Motīmālā and Pātharmālā, who marry Krishna. Maintaining the central theme of Krishna-lore, folk-singers have given it a regional orientation, which throws light on a few little known aspects of Krishna's life. It seems as if these ballads, in their own way fill up the gaps.

In the Hindi regions, three months are full of festivities: Śrāvana, a month of rains; Kārtika, a month of religious baths; and Phālguna (or Phāgun), a month of *Holī* frolics.

Songs of Rainy Season

In Śrāvana (rainy season) ladies sit on swings and sing songs. These songs express seasonal sights and sounds—pleasant sweet sounds of falling drops and showers and then of heavy incessant rains, sights of black clouds, rising one upon another sweeping the whole sky, sparkling of the lightning, sounds of frogs and beetles—all are woven into the texture of these songs, which throb with a longing for the paternal home, a brother's love and reminiscences of childhood. These series also include some beautiful songs of fidelity and betrayal, of forlorn life and frustrated love. *Morā* (Peacock's song) is a fine instance. A woman goes to the well to draw water where she finds a peacock. She fills her pitcher, but the peacock turns it over. She pleads to the peacock, but he is unmoved. Ultimately, she goes with the pitcher back to her house in a fit of anger, but she develops a sort of yearning for the peacock, whose sweet notes are embedded in her heart. Her relations at home offer her a wooden peacock, suggest that a peacock be carved on her bosom or that someone may go and kill the peacock. But these offers do not help her. She all the time craves for his voice which is resounding in her heart. Where is the remedy?

Kārtika Songs. Songs which are sung during the Kārtika month are all religious songs concerning gods and goddesses. These are sung by ladies who have taken a vow to bathe daily—early in the morning before sunrise and perform the ritual meant for each day.

Phālguna Songs (Holi Songs). The month of Phālguna or Phāgun, together with Caitra witnesses a boisterous mood of people finding expression in jocular and erotic songs. Teams of singers go about with programmes of *Rasiā*, *Jikaṛī Bhajan*, *Caubolā*, *Holī* and *Dhamār*. The burden of all these songs is the frolics of Lord Krishna. During this month it appears as if the whole village has plunged itself into colourful festivities. Every house, street, temple and the gods within, all seem to be participating in the festivities—throwing *gulāl* or red powder on one another and filling the whole atmosphere with red, yellow and green colours. '*Uṛat gulāl lāl bhaye bādar*', i.e. with red-powder flying everywhere, the clouds themselves have become red.

Other Songs. There are other kinds of songs such as *Cakkī* songs or *Jaṁtsār* songs relating to the milling out of flour, *Ropanī* and other songs connected with the activities in agricultural fields.

These folk-songs normally have their own special regions. *Rasiā* belongs to Bṛaja, *Kajarī* to Mirzāpur and Vārānāsi, *Lāvanī* is popular around Khurja, *Caubolā* in Agra, Hāthras and Kanpur, whereas *Kaharvā* is mostly prevalent in the east.

Folk-tales

The second important form of folk literature in Hindi is the folk-tale. The folk-tales are also many and varied. We find that these folk-tales belong to two categories. The first category consists of sacred folk-tales which are narrated and heard by women while performing some *vṛta* or ritual. Mostly these ritual-tales convey that if a particular ritual is performed it will prove a boon to the family, otherwise there may be some trouble. There is a tale about the presiding god of each day, e.g. Sun, Moon, Śiva, Hanumān, Ganesh and the like. During *Kārtika* baths the day's tale is a must. We shall narrate here in brief a tale about the Sun. 'The Sun used to divide his earnings daily in two equal parts. One half he bestowed on the whole of the creation and the other half he gave to his wife and mother. Whereas the whole universe was quite satisfied with their part of the gift, his own wife and mother complained of insufficiency. The Sun was very much perplexed about it. He then gave some slabs to his wife to play with. She was very pleased and went out in the neighbourhood in search of some playmates. But she found that nobody had time for the game, because they were busy and happy. This incident opened her eyes. Then she made herself busy, doing her housework herself. After which there were no more complaint!' All these tales have a benedictory line in the end praying that the good luck which came to him, her would also visit everybody else.

Other tales can be classified under the following heads: (i) tales about gods and deities; (ii) miracle- or fairy-tales; (iii) tales of craft and cunning; (iv) tales of peril or adventure; (v) fables of animals and birds; (vi) riddle-tales; (vii) drolls.

Mythological tales have gods or goddesses participating as personages. They appear in these tales as ordinary human

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beings but they possess supernatural powers. For example, in a tale entitled *Nārada and Bhagavān*, the two gods play the game of 'hide-and-seek'. When Nārada went into hiding, Bhagavān detected him but on his turn for hiding Bhagavān transformed himself into an infant and thus, Nārada could not recognize that the infant was Bhagavān himself. Later on, when the infant grew up into a boy and was drawing water from a well, Nārada passed that way. Then Bhagavān showed Nārada some of his marvels and revealed his identity. These tales are related to Karma, Lakṣmī, Dharma, Śani, Mahādeva and many other gods.

A tale in which Saturn or Śani plays a prominent role belongs to the cycle of tales relating to Vīra Vikramājit who takes on himself the misfortunes of others and faces them heroically. Tales of miracles naturally contain magic elements describing magical combats, etc. The tales of intelligence are many in number. One such tale deserves special mention here. It is actually a rendering in a rural set-up of 'A Tale of *Upakośa*' which occurs in *Kathāsaritsāgara* (The Ocean of Stories). It highlights the intelligence of a lady who fools several persons of power and saves her chastity.

In the tales of adventure, there is a display of wisdom and courage to confront perils of all kinds. The fable has some beast or bird as its main character. The riddle tales have some puzzles as their central theme.

Some of these tales of the Hindi region are current in different parts of India and abroad as well. Tales about master-thieves or robbers are spread over the whole world. The tales of demons are also many and varied in our folk literature. One such interesting tale has a hero who is quite young but equally cunning. He takes many things with him and retires at night to a giant's abode. The giant is overawed by him and runs away. There are some demons whose lives are contained in some external object—an egg or a parrot or a sword or an insect lying hidden at a place difficult to approach. The hero faces all the hazards and ultimately finds out the object and kills it—killing automatically the demon also with it. An international tale is very popular in the Hindi regions. It relates to two brothers or two friends and a lady. One of the two men falls in love with the lady when he sees her picture. After overcoming many hurdles he wins the hand of his lady-love. But his friend overhears a few voices, which forecast some evil awaiting the couple and also indicate the way out of them. The friend saves the couple from the evil; but on being compelled to tell the secret, he changes into a stone.

The famous Vedic tale of Purūravā and Urvasī is also internationally popular with its central motif rendered variously into regional forms. Urvasī is presented sometimes as a female swan, again as a doe and so on. This is a charming tale and according to *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, this is perhaps the oldest love story in the world.

Folk-dramas

Hindi folk-drama is also of ancient tradition. In the beginning, it was connected with dance, but gradually all the dramatic elements were introduced into it. Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* contains lots of material to prove that many forms, e.g. *Rāsaka*, *Hallīsaka* and *Bhāṇa*, etc. dealt with in the *śāstra*, were varieties of folk-drama. The *Bīsaldeva Rās* in Hindi mentions that it was sung by a party of singers and was accompanied by dance and instrumental music. Today the Hindi region has got various forms of folk-drama; most popular of these is the *Nauṭaṅkī* which has become a synonym for professional folk-stage. Kanpur and Hathras are two great centres of *Nauṭaṅkī*. Then there is another popular, but unprofessional stage called the *Bhagat*—which is managed by traditional *akhāṛās* with a regular system of *Khalīfās* and *Gurus*. *Nauṭaṅkī* and *Bhagat* both are lyrical in content and musical in form. All the dialogues and events are presented through songs of special types, such as *Caubolā*, etc. *Nauṭaṅkī* and *Bhagat* both use *Caubolā* but use different metrical patterns. The main musical instrument in both these folk-dramas is the drum. The themes of these lyrical folk-dramas are mostly based on traditional tales, although in the modern times, topic themes are also incorporated. *Svāṅgs* are also typical stage plays like the *Nauṭaṅkī*. Both these are published and are available in the market, but the scripts of *Bhagats* are neither published nor sold.

A good many of these dramas contain religious themes, such as the story of Bhaṛṭṛhari, who was a famous follower of the *Nātha* cult, or the legend of Pūraṇmal who was a victim of the caprice of his stepmother, but was saved by Gorakhnātha. The Jain akhāḍās of *Bhagat* dwell on the lives of Jain saints. These dramas sometimes deal with romantic adventures as in *Syāh Poś*, or narrate the heroic deeds of chieftains like Amar Singh Rāṭhor or strangely enough even the exploits of dare-devil Sultānā. Let it be noted that the folk-stage is called *Māc* in Madhya Pradesh.

Proverbs and Riddles

The next important form of folk literature consists of proverbs. The proverb is an interesting popular way of expressing an idea in piquant folk-speech. They compress wisdom into witty maxims. Here is an example: *Ghūre ki lattā bīneṁ kanātan ke ḍaul bāṁdheṁ*—this pungent saying is a reflection on people who, though devoid of proper means, are ambitious to do great jobs.

Hindi proverbs have been devised to serve different occasions. The proverb *Nau nakad na terah udhār* (Nine in hand are better than thirteen on loan), gives a practical advice in matters of business. *Hāth kaṅgan ko ārasi kyā* (Why a mirror for the anklet on the ankle) is another beautiful proverb which expresses the idea contained in a Sanskrit

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maxim, *Pratyakṣe kim pramāṇam*, i.e. 'What is before our eyes needs no proof'.

Actually, the common man cannot have any dialogue without making some use of apt proverbs. These proverbs in some cases betray the peculiar features of various castes and creeds and have a special interest for the ethnologist.

Riddles were originally a part of rituals in certain ceremonies. In some communities, the intelligence of the bridegroom was put to test by riddles at the time of marriage ceremony. It had an element of magic too and is even today described as '*gorakhdhandhā*'—possibly after the mystic Gorakhnātha. Now, of course, they have lost their original magical character and have become a means of recreation.

There are some very popular riddles about agriculture too and some of them deal with foodgrains, e.g. green and copious, it was studded with nine hundred thousand pearls and was standing in grandfather's garden wrapped up in a beautiful piece of cloth.

Another important form of folk literature relates to children. Nursery songs are important by themselves. Another special branch of children's folk literature deals with drolls. The drolls prevalent in the Hindi regions are found throughout India in some form or the other. A very well-known droll is that of a crow and a grain of gram.

Influence of Folk Literature

From the beginning the roots of Hindi literature were deeply embedded in folk literature. Sant Nām Deva in Maharashtra, and Kabir and other saint poets were more of folk figures than serious literary poets. This recognition they got very late in the history of literature. Their philosophy and teachings were all basically and linguistically folkloristical.

The *premagāthās* (love-ballads) formed a very rich branch of medieval Hindi literature. Its first poet was Mullā Dāūd who wrote *Candāyan*. *Candāyan* is based on a folk-ballad *Lora-Canaini* or *Loriki*. Nearly every *premagāthā* has some folk-tale or motifs for its structure. The greatest of Hindi *premagāthā* poets Malik Mohammad Jayasi in his great *premagāthā Padmāvat* has interwoven a popular folktale into it.

The *Bhakti* period of Hindi literature also was well inspired by folk literature. Elementally *bhakti* is a product of folk-culture. In Hindi, *bhakti* literature has two main streams—one stream took Krishna-lore from folk-storage and the poets gave its poetry an unfathomable depth and a matchless height, pervading it wholly with spirituality in lyrical strains. The second stream took Rama-lore for its theme and its poetry too reached great heights in the epic form having folk literary motifs interwoven throughout the theme. Modern period of Hindi poetry and literature has also drawn much material from folk literature. It is difficult to give its assessment in a para or two.

Preservation of Folk Literature

The first institutional attempt to collect and preserve folk literature was made by Braj Sāhitya Maṇḍal, Mathura. But this could not continue. Some collected material was published in the form of *Braj ki loka kahāniyaṁ* and *Braj kā loka sāhitya*.

The second institutional attempt was made by Sahitya Samsthān of Rajasthan, Vidyāpīṭh Udaipur in Rajasthan. It has also published some material.

A great institution named Bhāratīya Loka Kalā Maṇḍal, Udaipur was established primarily with the aim of promoting *Kaṭhputali* art, but it has developed into a real folklore museum. Folk-songs, folk-dance, folk arts of painting and image-making, folk-stage and its varieties all are preserved here and attempts are made to revive their vitality for the modern age. This institution helps scholars to carry on research and studies.

Another great institution is Rūpāyan at Borunda in Jodhpur (Rajasthan). So far as I know, this institution has got all kinds of modern tools to preserve the folk-songs, folk-tales, etc. They have established a branch to produce sets of gramophone records of folk-songs, etc. for sale.

K. M. Institute of Hindi Studies and Linguistics at Agra in U.P. has done a lot in collecting and preserving folk literature with modern tools and have produced many theses on folk literature. Nearly every university in the Hindi region has provided facilities to carry on research in folk literature for doctoral degrees.

APPENDIX

Jaccha: Birth Songs

Gaṅgā Jamunavāṁ Ke Bicavā
Tewaiyā ek tapu karai ho,
Gaṅgā! Apanī lahar Hamen detiu
me majhdhār ḍūbit ho.....

(In between Ganga and Yamuna rivers, oh, one woman is doing penance. Ganga give me one of your waves I would like to drown myself with it.) (tr.)

Are you harassed by your in-laws? Or is your mother's place far off? Oh lady, has your Hari, the husband gone out to some foreign country? What grief is impelling you to drown yourself? Ganga, I have no complaint against my in-laws, neither is my mother's place far off. My Hari too, Ganga, has not gone out. I am drowning myself for want of a child.

Oh woman, go back to thine home, I will not give you

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a wave. In the ninth month from today, you will be blessed with a child. Ganga, when I get a child I shall offer you a Piārī. Ganga! bless me with a son like Bhagiratha, I shall sing songs of your benevolence to glory.

According to another version of this song, the lady reaches her home, and asks her neighbour-carpenter to make one wooden child. But this wooden child would neither weep nor play in the courtyard and that makes her very unhappy. Another version goes still further. *Je nau je das mās*—nine months and ten months went by, she was blessed with a child and there was joy all round.

Bārahmāsā: A Song for Twelve Months

This is a very popular form of folk-songs, mostly sung during rainy season and mainly expresses the yearnings of a lady whose husband has gone out. Here is one *Bārahmāsā* from Kauravi dialect:

Suna sundar Baisākh kī biriyā me nū kahe
Joban laharem̐ liyā, to bāt kare mīnati.....

(Just listen, the beautiful damsel speaks thus on the arrival of *Vaiśākha*: My youth is overwhelming me. I am trying my best to console my tender heart. Is there some clever person who can fulfil the aspirations of my tender soul? Only my mother-in-law's son and the brother of my sister-in-law, my beloved, can fulfill my heart's desires. The month of Jyeṣṭha has come: wells have dried up, tanks and ponds also have dried and the fish are left without water. Now comes, *Sad* or the month of *Āṣāḍha* and it has filled the wells with water, ponds and tanks are also full and the fish are happy. I would have made a bungalow with a roof of betel-leaves, stitched with silk threads. It is the month of *Śrāvaṇa*, now, the swings are hanging all around. I would have got silk chords prepared to swing and would have been swinging with my maiden friends. How much I crave, oh my beloved husband, that you could give me swings with your hands. The month of *Bhādom̐* (Bhādrapada) has come, darkness is pervading all around and the lightning with a crackling roar fills the heart of the tender damsel with fear.) (tr.)

This song bears testimony to the poet's mastery on folk-idiom. He has deftly interwoven sentiments of separation into symbolic imagery. *Bārahmāsā* is very popular in the Hindi regions and is found in every dialect. Its popularity inspired even classical poets to include it in their epic structure.

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Kannada

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Introduction

Folklore is a very broad term. Apart from folklore of action, there are three general categories: (1) literary, (2) linguistic and (3) scientific. Whereas mythology, tales, songs and the like belong to the first category; speech, riddles, proverbs, and signs belong to the second; medicinal treatment, prophecy and various beliefs belong to the scientific category; dance, music, play, humour, drama, costume, and cookery, belong to the folklore of action. Language happens to be the medium of the first two categories; but there exists a fundamental difference between the two. Language in the first category tends to be artistic, whereas the second category manifests itself in the normal form of

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the language as such. Both the types come under the same title, viz. folk literature. The present survey accomodates only the following genres: prose-narratives, verse literature, proverbs, riddles and drama.

Folk literature belongs entirely to the oral tradition. Having been transmitted from generation to generation, it has changed, but continues in the memory of the people. When both standard and elite literature were preserved in the form of manuscripts, no attempt was ever made by any one to write down and preserve folk literature. This oral literature appeared on paper only when the age of printing was ushered in and an interest in folklore studies began to develop. To this day, folklore—and folk literature which is part of it—is developing in one form or the other; but unlike the West, we have not taken it seriously at all. As a result, our connotation of folk literature confines itself only to a few types of the literary category which have remained in the oral tradition.

Since folk literature has remained in oral tradition, we do not come across any direct evidence which would enable us to trace its origin and development. But, laying our hands on various evidences, it is possible for us to realize its antiquity. Right from the beginning, in every community folk literature is to be found in one form or the other. As the elite literature goes on developing, this non-elite literature recedes to the background. However, it is now a well-known fact that the origin of the elite literature lies in folk literature. Origins of the well-known epics of the world have been traced to folklore.

Kannada is a language of great antiquity. Evidences show that its literature had begun to emerge from the beginning of the Christian era, during which period, the Kannadigas nourished folk literature also.

The people expressed their emotions, entertained others by exhibiting their wit and humour. The more artistic compositions were easily remembered, and were passed on to later generations. Folklore became the treasure of the community. It has thus remained with us transcending the limitations of time.

The Antiquity

Śilappatikāram, an ancient epic in Tamil, contains a reference to the women of Karnataka who used to sing and dance. Scholars are of the opinion that these songs must be folk-songs (Jānapada Gīte). *Tripadi* or the Triplet happens to be one of the most important prosodic forms of folk poetry. This form of poetry—composed in three lines—seems to have assumed an elite form round about the 7th century. The well-known triplets of the Badami Inscription of Kappe Arabhaṭṭa afford significant evidence in this regard. *Onakevāḍu*, a form of composition used by the elite poets, is no doubt a genre of folk poetry. Poets like Nayasēna (12th century), Rāghavāṅka (12th–13th century), etc. have come under the influence of folk literature. The earliest prose work in Kannada, viz. *Vaḍḍārādhane* (c. 920) is an anthology of stories. Many of its stories are drawn from folklore. Scholars have opined that the framework of *Līlāvati* by Nēmicandra (12th century), a well-known poet, is a modified form of a folk-story. *Rāmadhānya Caritre* of Kanakadāsa (1509–1607) is completely folkloristic in its conception. It is also very clear that many of the compositions on Kumārarāma, a benevolent hero of Karnataka, have come under the influence of folk-ballads. There is also evidence of the elite poets looking down upon the literary traditions of folklore. A statement occurring in *Kavirājamārga* (9th century), the earliest extant work in Kannada, which runs thus has come under varied interpretations: *Kuritōdadeyuṁ Kāvyaprayōgapariṇata matigaḷ* (Well-versed in poetry are they, though not students of it art). This statement, which indicates that even the uneducated common man was well versed in the art of poetry is taken as the clear evidence of creation of folk literature which was in vogue then. Inevitably those poets were influenced by folk poetry consciously or otherwise. This is apparent in the handling of the language, the metrical form and the content by many a poet. Even Pampa (10th century) the first great poet of Kannada, is no exception to this. Scholars have pointed out the beauty of the racy elements in his works. Undoubtedly, many of his phrases and idioms have been drawn directly from folklore.

Another of our great poets, viz. Kumāravyāsa, has delved deeply into the folk-life which is evident from his work. Several folk expressions have found their way into the *Vacana* and *Kīrtana* literatures—viz. compositions of *Śaraṇas* or *Śaiva* saints and *Haridāsas* or *Vaiṣṇava* saints. In order to enliven one's compositions, even an elite poet has to depend on folk-life and literature. As a result, even the works of ancient poets marvel us with a distinct lustre only when they carry the impact of folk literature with them. These literary evidences conclusively establish the fact that a stream of folk literature was running parallel to that of elite literature. Nothing prevents us from concluding that folk literature in Kannada is as old as Kannada language and literature. Folk literature of this antiquity is naturally abundant and varied.

Recent Studies

It was not until very recently that scientific studies of folklore were undertaken in Kannada. In the beginning the attention of all those who were interested in the study of folklore was confined to literature as such, and quite a number of collections of folk-songs had been published. No one had ever thought further than that of collecting and publishing folk-songs. Of late, books on folklore are appearing on a large scale. In a bibliography of folk literature, publsıhed in 1974 by this writer, 500 works have been

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annotated. Since then, there has been a further growth of publications in this category. Since all the three universities in the state, as also the Kannada Sahitya Parishat, have evinced deeper interest in folk literature and folk arts, material needed for the study has been collected and published in considerable numbers.

Categories

Folk-tales in Kannada are so numerous and varied that we come across examples justifying any type of classification. These tales can be very broadly classified into two categories: complex and simlple. The former develops on the basis of several motifs. In the latter, though it may possess more than one motif, there is no complication with regard to their mutual relation. There is room for further classification within these categories. Tales introducing supernatural elements deserve to be reckoned in the category of complex tales. There are many tales which involve husbands, wives, aides and opponents—every one of them invested with some supernatural power. The Sun-god and the Rain-god and the like are the husbands; nymphs and mermaids and the like are the wives. When Heaven and Earth co-mingle as they do, in these tales, the listeners are enthralled. Cruelty and pomp are the dominant qualities found in the aides and opponents of the supernatural elements. In these tales many a time even flora and fauna may assume roles. Noteworthy are the tales of wit and wisdom in the category of simple tales. Wisdom appears as both good and bad. Designs and plots become important here as they both involve solving problems, cheating and acting. Numerous types of tales, viz. animal tales, formula tales, proverb tales, riddle tales, dialogue tales, moral tales, etc. are found in Kannada. There are numerous tales concerning the world of animals. The fox plays a singular role in the Kannada folk-tales, with local variations. Scholars have referred to those Kannada tales which have migrated from Karnataka into the other regions. Whether they relate to human beings or animals, some of the better known characters have become household names. A tale cited by J. S. Paramashivaiah is a rare and distinct type of the Kannada folk-tale:

A young parrot asks a carpenter to cut down a tree. He makes fun of it. It goes to the cat and asks it to bite his leg. The cat laughs at it. It then approaches the dog and asks it to bite the cat. The dog does not agree. It then reaches up to the grandmother and asks her to beat the dog. The grandmother does not consent. Then it goes to the grandfather and asks him to thrash the grandmother. The grandfather refuses. It now proceeds to the cow and asks her to kick the grandmother when she comes to milk the cow. She too does not agree. But the calf agrees to bite the mother's udder. When the grandmother comes to milk the cow, the calf bites its udder. The cow kicks. The milk is spilt. The grandfather thrashes the grandmother. The grandmother beats the dog. The dog bites the cat. The cat in turn bites the carpenter and climbs the tree. The carpenter cuts down the tree. The wish of the young parrot is fulfilled.

This is a story with a circular plot. Stories which fit into a formula so neatly are rare.

Folk Poetry

The richest treasure in Kannada folk literature is that of poetry. For the purpose of this survey, this could be classified into two categories: songs and poetic traditions cultivated by the professional singers. In the former we come across short lyric-like songs and ballads dealing with numerous subjects. Ballads are long narrative poems treating mythological, historical and social stories. But songs relate to particular occasions and, their significance lies in this.

There are quite a number of songs relating to various professions. Among these, agricultural songs (Bēsayāda Hāḍu) are more numerous. Songs concerning the various agricultural operations starting from the sowing of seeds up to reaping the corn and bringing it home are found in the various parts of Karnataka. Songs concerning pounding are well known in Kannada folk literature. Noteworthy are the ones which are mainly of a devotional nature and relate the various stages in the work of household women since their getting up in the morning up to the end of their daily activities. Most beautiful are those songs which describe the various facets of the family life; they are very moving. Songs dealing with the joys and sorrows of family life, intimate relations, plays and prattles of the children, the agony of the barren woman, jealousies of the wives, affection between the brother's spouse and the sisters-in-law, affection between the brother and the sister, love of the husband and the wife, the happiness at the mothers house—are among the most tender and moving compositions in Kannada folk literature. A very few instances must suffice. Here is a mother rejoicing in the loveliness of her child:

The lip of the crying darling is like the edge of the coral
The tender brow like the tender twig of the neem; his glance
Like the brightness of the weapon in Shiva's hand.

A childless wife bewails her lot:

What's this life of a young woman with no child?
It's like the toil of a hired ox; like the plantain leaf
Spread for a meal and used and then thrown far, far away.

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A housewife without a mother speaks:

Turn not, my mind, to the home of my birth where there is no mother,
The tender calf that comes to the water-tank, it turns back,
Look at its grief then.

Songs dealing with mysticism, though they seem to be simple, have enshrined deep thoughts. Songs about children and nursery rhymes are available in considerable numbers. Rhyme is dominant in the nursery rhymes. Children enjoy singing them, though their meaning is of little significance. Songs celebrating the *Dīpāvaḷi*, *Dasarā* and similar festive occasions and social customs like the marriage, etc. entertaining occasions like the *Kōlāṭa* (Dance with Kōl, i.e. pointed sticks) have become exceptionally attractive on account of their wit and humour, fun and irony, and amorous sentiments. Among the ballads, those that relate sacrifice move our hearts. 'The Barren Honnamma', 'An Offering to the Tank', etc. are the best examples of this kind. These ballads contain a variety of subjects, but they mainly relate mythological and historical episodes. Local legends have a special place in these compositions. Of the Kannada folk-songs, only one example can be cited here. This is a humorous song dealing with a loving pair of a husband and his wife:

The husband asks his wife 'why don't you spin?' She says that she does not have a 'wheel'. The husband dismantles his cart and gets a wheel prepared. He asks her 'why don't you now spin?' She gives another reason. The husband dismembers another useful article and gets her what she wants. Likewise the dialogue continues. Every article needed for spinning is now ready. His question remains: 'why don't you spin now?' She says, 'I have no friends'. He calls upon the neighbours in the street and collects a team of her friends. Even at the end of the poem the question stands out, 'why don't you spin?' The witty wife replies 'I do not know spinning.'

The Professional Singers

Compositions of the poetic traditions cultivated by the professional singers, which belong to the second category, are of a diverse kind. There are many traditions, and it is difficult even to enumerate them here. Sometimes, they even assume epic dimensions. These singers are generally divided into two categories: religious and secular. Singers belonging to the religious category adore a particular deity. This deity reigns over a particular place or area. This place or area is generally a famous place of pilgrimage in Karnataka. Their objective in singing the praise of the presiding deity of the place and propagating its greatness is to cultivate the religious values. It is their duty to go to all those places where the devotees of this deity live, and participate in their social and religious observances. Actually, they are considered representatives of those presiding deities. Some categories of such singers could be mentioned here. *Dēvaraguḍḍas* or *Kaṁsāḷe* singers (Kamsāḷe=brass cymbal) hold Mādēśvara of the Mahadēsvara hills as their venerable deity, and sing his praise on the beat of the *Kaṁsāḷes*—consisting of a gong and a cup to beat with, both made of bronze. The composition on the Male Mādēśvara happens to be the longest folk composition so far published in Kannada. Its volume outclasses even the well-known *Kalevala* (Finnish National epic). P. K. Rajashekhara has published in 1973 this composition running to more than 1200 pages. *Nīlagāras* are those singers who praise *Maṇṭēsvāmi*, the presiding deity of Kappaḍi, Maḷavaḷḷi, etc. The devotees of *Ellamma* of Savadatti belong to the *Caudiki* group. The *Goravas* are the adherents of the presiding deity of the places Mailāra and Muḍukutore. They beat on the *Ḍamaruga* (an hour-glass type of small drum) and play on the flute. Those praising Juñjappa of Hāgalavāḍi and Kuḷavērahaḷḷi belong to the *Gaṇe* group and play a very long flute. Each group has a distinct costume and mark exclusive to itself—they confine themselves to a particular geographical area.

The secular singers are entirely different from the religious singers. Songs sung by them are not intended to please or praise any deity but, on the other hand, they propagate moral values. Their activities are not confined to worship festivals and *jātrās*; they have nothing to do with religious practices. Among these secular singers the following are the famous: *Karapālas*, *Dombidāsas*, *Jōgis*, *Tambūris*, etc. Every one of them carries a musical instrument. They have their distinct costumes too. *Guṇasāgari*, *Kāḷingarāya*, *Arjuna Jōgihāḍu*, *Māgaḍi Kempēgauda*, *Kāḍasiddamma*, *Gaṅge-Gauri*, etc. are the most famous secular compositions. The contents of these compositions are mythological, historical and social.

Whether it is secular or religious, the content of the compositions is varied. If the feminine roles are predominant in some of the compositions, male roles dominate in some others. Like the adulations of the deities, amorous episodes too form the content of the compositions. Some romances are also popular. Like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagavata, many stories of Siva have also contributed to the contents of these compositions. Though such episodes have been dealt with, we have not yet been able to unearth either a complete folk Ramayana or Mahabharata in the poetic form. Compositions relating historical episodes are in plenty. The battle of *Piriyāpaṭṇa*, *Sarjapa Nāyaka*, *Māgaḍi Kempegauḍa*, *Saṅgoḷḷi Rāyaṇṇa* and the like could be cited here. Among the love episodes or romantic compositions *Mēlukōṭe Celuvarāya*, *Biḷigiriraṅga*, *Sāradhara*, *Nīlakaṇṭha-Rūpavati*, etc. are very famous.

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For two to three nights the singers continuously sing many of these compositions. Some of the compositions are combinations of prose and poetry, and even contain lengthy dialogues, as in dramas. Though repetitions at times bore us, they have their own place in the framework of the entire composition. Noble characters, and episodes, supernatural incidents, unusual behaviour and extraordinary ways of life—by virtue of the combination of all these, the Kannada folk poetry represented by the professional singers presents a new world.

Proverbs and Riddles

Proverbs and riddles constitute the other two important aspects of verbal folklore in Kannada. In a way, they are of a greater daily use than the other forms of folk literature. While the former is the sum and substance of the experience of a community, the latter represents intellectual acrobatics. 'A proverb is as good as the scripture' is one such proverb in Kannada. This saying indicates the status and power allocated to it in our society. The place of a pickle in an Indian meal is equated to that of the proverb in our speech. This very idea has been expressed in a proverb which runs like this: 'A pickle before a meal; a proverb before a talk.' Proverbs enshrine in a compact, easy-to-remember and rhyme-bound idiom the vast experiences of life. Proverbs are friends, philosophers and guides. These are words of wisdom and lessons of morality. All the ingredients of poetry like rhyme, simile, metaphor and the like appear in the proverbs. According to an estimate, the proverbs in Kannada number about fifty thousand. Their collection itself has a history of more than a hundred years. So far about forty collections have been published. Proverbs relating to mythology and history are also numerous: 'Service of the squirrel, and devotion of sand'; 'Ravana was spoilt by his lust for woman and Kaurava by his greed for land'; 'The unrestrained ape set Lanka on fire' are some such proverbs.

Some of the most ancient linguistic forms have been preserved in the proverbs. For example, the verbal root 'aḍu' (to cook) which has been preserved in this proverb: 'aṭṭa mēle ole uriyitu, keṭṭa mēle buddhi bantu' (The oven began to burn aright after the food was cooked; one learnt wisdom after being ruined). Likewise the proverb 'Āridre maḷeyalli ādvane gaṇḍa' (whosoever fit in during the commencement of rains became the husband) indicates the hurried marriages that are arranged during the commencement of the rainy season (on account of the fact that mobility is entirely cut off during the rainy season which lasts for months). Similarly 'Svāti biddare muttinantha jōḷa' (If it rains during 'svati', one reaps pearl-like maize) stresses the need and importance of the timely rains. The day-to-day life of the Kannadigas has thus been mirrored in thousands of proverbs, such as these. Proverbs like 'Kulabiṭṭarū chala biḍabāradu (one should not give up steadfastness even if he is outcast) and 'Āḷāgi duḍi, arasāgi uṇṇu' ('Labour like a servant, and enjoy like a king') indicate distinct ways and visions of life. Some of the Kannada writers have of late brought out collections of their own proverbs!

Unlike the proverbs, riddles are not universal in their appeal. It is a means adopted by our people to provide some entertainment during the hours of leisure, resorting of course to intellectual acrobatics. There are evidences to show that riddles have appeared in various forms even in our ancient literature. Concealment of meaning and pun on words and wit—are the objectives here. Riddles are of various kinds. Some assume the form of a dialogue; some are found in the nature of a chain. In the latter, answer to a riddle actually gives rise to a scond riddle. Some riddles are also in the form of songs. Riddles may involve mathematics. They may relate customs and beliefs. It may be the object of some riddles to elicit an obscene answer. The wit and wisdom of the Kannadigas have found expression in the framing of these riddles and providing their solution. The history of the publication of the collections of riddles extends itself back to about four decades. So far about twenty collections—big and small—have been published.

Folk-drama

Folk-drama in Kannada seems to have a history going back to the 3rd century. According to some researchers, evidence of a flourishing folk theatre dates from the 11th century. Folk-drama was of Dravidian origin. It was rooted in the rituals of worship and the mask, the flamboyant costume and make-up and the dance had their origin in the worship of various deities. A story element, dance and acting combined at a later stage to shape the folk-drama. *Dāsara Āṭa* (which flourished mainly in North Mysore) was mainly concerned with the rivalry of the sexes. This form probably developed into the *Tamāśa* of Maharashtra and later returned to influence Kannada drama. *Doḍḍāta* or *Mūḍalapāya* and *Yakṣagāṅa* have close affinities. *Yakṣagāṅa* developed independently in the coastal region after the fall of the Vijayanagara Empire and has now come to be associated with that region. But both *Doḍḍāta* and *Yakṣagāṅa* choose their material from the mythologies and depict heroes and heroic deeds. Both use flamboyant costumes and make-up, both rely on a director on the stage (the 'Kathegāra' of *Doḍḍāta* and the 'Bhāgavatha' of *Yakṣagāṅa*) and music —loud, stimulating and popular—is integral to both. Since educated people evinced interest in *Yakṣagāṅa* it became more sophisticated and the dialogue was more artistically controlled. A performance takes hours and usually begins late at night and goes on till the early hours of the morning. The dialogue is highly stylized and heavily dependent on ornate language and rhymes. It is spectacular and highly

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emotional. *Sannāṭa*, of more recent origin, is the watershed between the professional, elite theatre and folk theatre. It essayed not only mythological themes but also social and historical themes. The dialogue is less grandiloquent and the story better woven.

Despite the onslaughts of modern entertainment folk-drama has retained its popularity in the countryside. The *Yakṣagāṅa* has a strong appeal to urban audiences also. The impact of Brecht has made the modern dramatist go back to folk-drama.

Dramatists like Girish Karnad and Chandrasekhara Kambar have grafted elements of folk-drama on the elite drama successfully.

Conclusion

As has been pointed out earlier, folk literature in Kannada is rich and varied. It has exercised a strong influence on elite literature for centuries. Poets of the modern age like D. R. Bendre and Chandrasekhara Kambar have come under its influence. It is difficult to survey it in a short article of this type. In order to introduce the nature of folk literature in Kannada, only five of its genres have been taken into consideration here.

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Kashmiri

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Historical Background

Historically speaking Kashmiri folklore should be as old as the earliest point of departure of the Kashmiri dialect from the parental (*Apabhraṁśa*) stock, round about the 10th century; but occasional improvisation during oral transmission of an item has updated it to the period in which it came to be first transcribed in a particular version.

Cult Transformation. It is rarely, therefore, that we come across the earliest version of an item of folk literature except, perhaps, a few proverbs and cult-chants. A cult-chant may, however, get unrecognizably transformed into a nonsense doggerel or a nursery rhyme like:

okus bokus tilavan tsokus
onum batuk lodum daegi
shāl kuchkuch vāṅg noe
brimij-hāras pony chhokum
brimij-benyae ṭekis ṭyokā

This doggerel is now recited by tiny-tots in a game in which the fingers of hands pointing to the ground are counted by turn and determining the finger touched when the piece comes to a close. The game is sometimes conducted by an elderly person, often the grandparent. The original version of the doggerel is conjectured to have been something like:

o kus bo kus teli van tsa kus
onum botukh lodum daegi
shāla-kuchkuch vāṅg noe
brahmādhāras pavan chhikum
brahma chhu byon nay ḍekas ṭyokā

Who is he? Who am I? Well then, who are you?
The sky I caught and put inside the cooking-pot;

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The jackal-uvulation is, by no means, the *vāk*;
The *brahma-randhra* I treated with *pavana* (held in);
Brahma is not separate; (hence) the *tilakam* on the brow.
(tr.)

The reference in this doggerel to the esoteric discipline called *yogasādhanā* or *prāṇābhyāsa* is clear from the reminiscent terms like *botukh* (*bhūta-kha*: *bhūtākāśa*: the material sky), *vāṅg* (*vāk*, *vaikharī*: inspired utterance), *brahmādhāra* (brahmarandhra believed to be the opening through which the awakened *kuṇḍalinī* ascends to the highest abode of bliss), *pavana* (*prāṇa*: the breath believed to be brought under control by yoga) and *tilakam* (the ritualistic mark on the forehead of a devotee). Ascribed to *Lal Ded* (14th century) the original piece has become transformed during the lengthy course of folk transmission, presenting today a telling instance of popular verse assuming the complexion of a folk piece. Folk poetry in the Kashmiri language must, of course, have started much earlier, and the folk-tale in the local Prakrit must have appeared earlier still.

Folk-tale Tradition

The *Bṛhatkathā* tradition recaptured in Sanskrit verse by Kshemendra and Soma-deva (both of 11th-century Kashmir) must have originally been in the mother tongue though Bilhana (of the same period) would like to believe that even the women of his time 'spoke Sanskrit as well as Prakrit (quite fluently) like their mother tongue.' Sanskrit flourished along with the Prakrit of the region (which, significantly enough, is recognized by Sitikantha, 13th century) as the *sarva-gōcara dēśabhāṣā*, i.e. the common language of the people of his time. Sanskrit, nevertheless, continued to be the language of culture and the court till the 15th century, when Kashmir came to enjoy the Sultans' patronage for a few generations. Yet the growing importance of Persian as the language of the court and culture proved a mighty influence on the evolving pattern of the Kashmiri folk-tale which had the privilege to receive afresh the *Bṛhatkathā* tradition in the Persian renderings too. Needless to point out that the transformation of the *Pañcatantra* as well as the *Vetāla* tales in the Persian renderings is duly reflected in the Kashmiri folk-tale. Thus, for instance, the hermit of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* tale becomes a Muslim priest (*mulla* or pir) in the Kashmiri version, while instead of the monkey packed up in the box as a substitute for the rescued damsel (in the original), we find a bear or a wolf in the Kashmiri adaptations.

Reference may here be made to a masterpiece of folk adaptation registered by a tale popularly known as the tale of the magic ring, in which the strands of the *Pañcatantra* fable (probably through the *Kalīla va Damna* version) and the *Alif Lailā* episodes are wonderfully woven into an exquisite pattern of folk entertainment. A merchant's young son sent out by his wealthy father with just two hundred pieces of silver saves the lives of a cat and a snake by purchasing them from their angered masters, paying as much as one hundred pieces for each. The grateful snake takes him through a pond straight to his father's kingdom down below where the snake-chief rewards him with a magic ring. The ring exposed to the sunray secures him a magnificent garden palace with a charming damsel as his wife. Unfortunately one day a witch manages to rob the ring which she carries away to a lovelorn prince pining for the fairy whose golden hair he had seen floating down a stream. The prince thereby gains the garden palace along with the damsel who, somehow, persuades him to wait for some time. Meanwhile, the forlorn merchant boy is consoled by his friends, the cat and the snake, who go in search of their mistress. The cat, before long, reaches the prince's garden and pounces upon the rat-chief threatening to eat it up if it did not produce the magic ring. The rat-chief rushes straight to the witch and dips its tail into the gullet of the sleeping witch compelling her to vomit out the ring. The ring thus recovered restores the charming damsel to the merchant-boy who lives happily ever after with his lovely wife and faithful friends.

Assimilative Improvisation. Such a generative process of improvisation is, in fact, characteristic of all folklore, particularly of a region that has attracted and absorbed a rich variety of cultural influxes like those of Nagas, Pishacas, Aryans, Kushans, Huns, Khashas, Turks, Mongols, Bhautas, Kiratas and Darads. The imprints of pre-Vedic, Vedic and post-Vedic cultures on this lore may not be easy to pinpoint; yet its texture reveals strands that are recognizable as a legacy (or, a hangover) of the Saiva, Baudha, Sakta, Kaula (Tantric), Natha, Sahaja, Vaishnava and Sufistic traditions. The milieu that inspired Mulla Mohsin Fani, the Kashmiri preceptor of the Moghul Prince Dara Shikuh (17th century) to compile *Dabistān e Mazāhib* (An Encyclopaedia of Religions) would certainly contribute to the common people's outlook on man in a pluralistic society. Hence the emphasis on the humanistic perspective in which Indian mysticism and Iranian Sufism blended into a universal concern for the essential man cutting across a bewildering variety of creed and dogma. Within such a broad framework are treated themes that, one way or the other, attract the folk.

Wedding-song Adjustment. No wonder, therefore, that *Vanavun* (the wedding-song hoard of the Kashmiris) betrays a similar capacity for adjustment to the timely need, and yet it retains a number of old traits in content, vocabulary and diction, all essentially folkspun. The inaugural piece, for instance, starts with the vocative expression *Henzae* (Hello Ladies) and then runs thus:

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śoklam kārith hemav vanavoenuy
rut phal dyutuy māji bavānyae

(improvising *śārikāyae*, *śāradāyae*, *rāgnyāyae*, *durgāyae*, *śivāyae*, *tripurāyae*, *zālāyae*, *manglāyae*, etc. for *bavānyae*, invoking thereby the blessings of the Bhavani variously called Sarika, Sarada, Rajni, Durga, Siva, Tripura, Bala, Mangala, etc.). The snatch may roughly be rendered as:

Śuklam...and here we start our *vanavun* (singing);
may Mother Bhavani, yield you right reward.
(may Mother Sarika, Sarada, Rajni.....) (tr.)

After the advent of Islam, however, this chant became relevantly improvised as:

Bismillah kārith hemav vanavoenuy
Sāhiban anjām oenuyae.

Bismillah...and here we start our *vanavun* (singing); may Lord conclude it happily for you. (tr.)

The substitution of *Bismillah* (ar rahmān e rahīm) for *Śoklam* (Śuklāmbaradharam Viṣṇum...) is, obviously, dictated by variation in the respective religio-cultural register of the participant.

Matter, Manner and Genre

Matter. Kashmiri folk literature does one of the following things:

It entertains by narrative traditional anecdotes, episodes or tales of wonder and fantasy (including myth and legend), adventure and escapade, confrontation and conquest, fun and frolic, wit and wisdom (of course, in the convincing context of the past that can be shared;) and, simultaneously, it informs and enlightens us on the immense possibility of what is to be, compensating thereby for what should have been.

It thus unburdens the collective heart by uninhibited outpourings of emotion, articulating thereby: aspiration and exasperation, ambition and effort, mystery-mongering and speculation, wishful thinking and destiny-baiting, the will to survive and the concern to protect, the urge to acquire, the need to share togetherness and the dread of being isolated, the tendency to ritualize and the unwillingness to believe the obvious, the a:e of the intriguing and the craze for the ceremonial, personal participation in collective joy and sorrow and interpersonal solicitude for individual weal and woe. All this it does, ensuring that we are comprehensively reflected right from the newly-born babe to the experienced grandparent, in a variety of sectors and situations of folk life.

Manner. This literature assumes three main forms: prose, verse and an admixture of the two (including versified prose as in some proverbs and riddles, and prosaic verse as in some conventionalized narratives meant for collective recitation). Alliteration and cross-assonance that occasionally appear in the folktale too, are musically utilized in the song (solo as well as choral), and effectively employed in the action-song meant for the child. Metres used are, by and large, qualitative even in recitational pieces like the doggerel or the nursery song.

Kashmiri folk literature, thus, comes to us either in spoken diction or through singing (sometimes recitational). The setting throughout remains congregational, mostly participative, and occasionally performative, entertaining an appreciative audience.

Genre. Genrewise, accordingly, Kashmiri folk literature comprises: (i) *Luka-kath* (folk-tale); (ii) *Jaṭa* (fun); (iii) *Laḍiṣah* (comic minstrelsy); (iv) *Luka-bāth* (folk-song); (v) *Daput* (proverb); and (vi) *Pratsh* (riddle).

(1) *Luka-kath* comprises *Kathā* (mythological and legendary accounts), *Mahātam* (topographical tradition of sanctity), *Kaṣf o Karāmāt* (hagiological accounts and anecdotes), *Dalil* (the tale of romantic adventure and miracle), *Qusa* (anecdotal episode, generally autobiographical), *Dāstān* (prose narrative with chunks of lyrical ballad and *vanavun* thrown in), *Jānvar-kath* (fable) pure as well as mixed, *Parī-kath* (fairy tale) including *Jina-kath* (ghost story), *Gāṭajār-kath* (tale of wit and wisdom including enigma), *Cāry-kath* (tale of stupidity or ludicrousness), and *Asan-kath* (tale of mirth and laughter).

Any watertight compartmentalization, obviously, cannot be attempted as a measure of overlapping is bound to be there. The *Cāry-kath*, for instance, is likely to contain a strain of mirth and laughter which mainly characterize the *Asan-kath*.

A few outstanding devices, motifs and situations worked out in these tales, however, are: The story within a story; the story tagged on to a story; a story strung upon a common thread of the narrative.

Themes such as a female snake changing into a charming damsel and marrying a prince, or a grateful snake conducting his saviour to the kingdom of his father who rewards the benefactor of his son with a magic ring, abound in Kashmiri folk literature. Other themes are those where charming fairies are accessible generally through ponds or springs, and have to be won over after a series of personal risks are taken and hazards overcome. The feather of a wild eagle shown towards the fire summons the eagle who helps the hero to move about at his sweet will. A flying cow carries you wherever you will, while a cup at your service serves you any dish of your choice. A stick at your beck and call beats away any foe of yours. If you manage to snatch the cap off the Yaksha's head, you will

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roll in wealth, and the cap on your head makes you invisible to others.

Ghosts ask puzzling questions and threaten to kill one who fails to provide satisfying solutions. A fairy vomits out precious rubies and relieves the distress of a poor fellow. A swan lays golden eggs and brings relief to a kind-hearted sufferer. A vicious queen conspires with the vizier, her paramour, against her unsuspecting husband. Wicked co-wives plot the murder of a virtuous queen who is, however, providentially saved. A vile queen's stepson ordered to be assassinated is spared by the compassionate assassin, safely packed up in a wooden box and floated down the currents of a local river, whence he is finally rescued and restored to parental affection as well as princely dignity. A kind-hearted commoner rescues a lovely maiden from a wooden box floating down a stream, and encases a furious bear as a substitute so as to punish the devilish priest responsible for the sinister mischief calculated to allow him to have the maiden as his exclusive keep. A furious tempest hurls a mighty ship into the stomach of a huge fish, and the hero tears the monster's stomach open.

A bird couple (representing Siva and Parvati) perched on the twig of a tree take pity on a blinded prince sitting forlorn beneath, and chirp out the secret device by which eyesight could be restored to the unfortunate prince. Hawks and elephants help in the selection of new kings. A mighty eagle carries aloft the hero into mysterious regions of rugged rocks. An abandoned girl is adopted and brought up by a crow who, later on, marries her to a charming prince.

A witty tailor going up a miraculous ladder stumbles into the weird world of a ginn, and displaying his scissors and rod blackmails him on the pretext that he had been deputed by King Solomon to secure the jinn's hide for a full-size royal robe. An intelligent peasant girl decodes all the cryptic communications received from a wise prince wandering in search of a suitable spouse, and marries him. A sagacious young wife helps her stupid husband to recover all his wealth lost by him to a cunning gambler.

An ingenious adventurer in the employ of a king moves in disguise outwitting a number of government functionaries including the *kotval* and the vizier (all unable to detect the daring robber) and forces the exasperated king to proclaim the award of half his kingdom as well as the hand of his daughter to the intriguing hero in disguise. A noble thief robs the rich only to provide timely relief to the destitute. Two master cheats vie with each other in the art of hood-winking, and after a neck-to-neck contest one of them gets the better of the other, and they agree to coexist, each minding his own domain.

Hasty action in killing a devoted hawk on mere suspicion of evil design is repented when the real worth of the victim is revealed. Life-index resides in a parrot or the hollow of a tree. A soul leaves its own body aside and enters the body of a dying person with the idea of re-entering into his own at a later stage, but when an adversary reduces his body to ashes and condemns his soul thereby to remain a different personality, a holy person intervenes and helps him regain his original form.

The *dāstān* which, by and large, treats of a folk romance like the *Lālnāma* (the romance of Laila and Majnu) or the *Yūsafnāma* (the romance of Usaf and Zulikha) or the *Himal* (the romance of Heemal and Nagrai) occasionally presents pathetic (or even gruesome) allegories like that of *Akanandun*, reminiscent of the Biblical episode of Abraham's sacrifice. Akanandun was the only brother of seven sisters and was granted to his parents as a boon by a vagrant saint subject to the painful condition that he would be returned to the saint at the age of twelve. Accordingly the saint appears before the parents at the stipulated moment and demands the child back, insisting that the mother cut him to pieces and cook him in a pot. Seeing no way out of the grave misfortune the entrapped mother obeys the unrelenting orders and is finally shocked back into happiness when, at the bidding of the saint, Akanandun also joins the feast. Needless to point out that the *dāstān* woven round this bare skeleton is extremely moving in terms of emotional depiction within the appropriately contrived framework of domestic aspiration and divine dispensation.

(2) *Jaṭha* (fun), generally in prose, occasionally in verse, includes *chāṭ* (joke), *ṭuk* (wit), *maskharil* (buffoonery), *rād* (yarn), *ṭasna* (ridicule), *tanz* (satire), *hazal* (sarcasm), *hajuv* (lampoon) and *naqul* (mimicry) which, in the *bāṇḍapāthur* (folk theatrical caricature) has preserved fairly old strata of the people's reaction to administrative bunglings, particularly of the Darad (Chak) period (16th century).

(3) *Laḍiṣah* (comic minstrelsy) is, by and large, balladic, and is, invariably, recited to the accompaniment of a jingle produced by half a dozen iron rings manipulated around an iron rod about a metre long. This folk genre incorporates one or many of the elements of fun already detailed in item 2, for the purpose of caricaturing situations arising from natural calamities, social maladjustments, economic exploitation, political oppression and religious hypocrisy. Among the themes treated under it are: water scarcity; rivers in spate; failure of crops causing famine; hoarding and rise in prices; non-availability of salt; control and blackmarket; a devastating fire accident; terrifying tremors; doomsday portents; the first aeroplane in Kashmir; bumper crop in danger; a clumsy wedding feast; an old man marrying a teenaged virgin; an awkward matrimonial; a daughter-in-law confronting her mother-in-law; the scourge of new fashions; dowry-baiting; law and order comics; and the problems of forced labour.

(4) *Luka-bāth* comprehends the following:

(a) *Vanavun* (ceremony song) which touches upon a celebrative aspect of any ceremony like *zarakāsay* (tonsure), *khutna* (circumcision), *niṣāny* (betrothal), *maekhal* (sacred thread ceremony) and *khāndar* (wedding). It reflects the

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unsophisticated joys and sorrows of the community within the cultural registers peculiar to it, particularly in terms of socio-religious custom, convention and ritual. Of immense appeal are the snatches sung at the reception of the bridegroom's party, but the most touching are those that are heard at the hour of the bride's departure from her erstwhile home. Among these we find gems like:

mālinici kunza kar dedi havālay
naeri vany vāriviki savālay
Hand over keys of Daddy's house to your Mummy;
'tis time you mind the call of your in-laws. (tr.)

Pātshah-baranyae ḍūly chhe na naerān;
Asi chhe na khvandamāl vonda phaerān
The *doli* is hesitant to move out of the gate;
We would not let our *khvandamāl* (jessamine-garland) (tr.)

Bāyoe nazar thāv bānahaj-bālas;
Yuth noe dvada-pyālas grāy lagiyoe
Brother *doli*-bearer, mind you the *Bānahāl*-slope;
See that the cup of milk (you carry) does not tilt. (tr.)

'Māj zamīnae chhuyeāsavālay;
Masum thal hay havalay chhey.'
Mother Earth, kindly vouchsafe us a boon;
Innocent seedling, now, is your concern. (tr.)

Metaphoric appropriateness of Mother Earth and Innocent Seedling for the mother-in-law and the new bride is simply breathtaking.

(b) *Vatsun* (folk lyric), wrongly supposed to be the monopoly of women derives its sustenance from a larger cross-section of observation and experience and, therefore, finds wider scope for treatment of reflexes and responses going beyond the circumference of the family or the community to which the *Vanavun* is naturally confined. Nevertheless, the *vatsun* sung to the accompaniment of the folk instrument called the *tumbaknār* (a flask-shaped clay-kettle drum) is known as *tumbaknāri-vatsun*, generally presented on festive occasions like the wedding.

(c) *Līlā* (devotional verse) is peculiar to Hindu theology, generally addressed to the Divinity called variously as Īśar (Isvara), Nārān (Narayana), Rām (Rama), Kreṣin (Krishna), Dīvī (Devi), Bagavati (Bhagavati), Māj Bavānī (Mata Bhavani), Venāyak (Vinayaka), Gaṇapat (Ganapati), Śombū (Sambhu) and so on.

(d) *Nāt* (lyrical tribute) is invariably addressed to the Prophet praising him for his unquestioned greatness.

(e) *Manqibat* (religious panegyric) confines itself to the Muslim saints and divines of eminence, particularly Shaikh Noor ud Din, Shah e Hamdan, Makhdoom Saheb, Dastgeer Saheb and Shah e Jeelan.

(f) *Chhakri-bāth* (folk chorus) is more a genre of folk music than of literature, yet some types of folk-songs suit this style of musical presentation better than others. Otherwise, *chhakri-bāth* is the name given to any folk-song sung by a choral group to the accompaniment of folk instruments including the *tumbaknār* (resembling a big terra-cotta flask with the bottom replaced by a tightly fastened animal-hide) and the *noṭ* (a sort of ghaṭam).

(g) *Rohvy-bāth* (a folk-song suiting the *rhov*-dance) is, similarly, a genre of folk-dance rather than of literature; yet some songs suit this style better than others. *Rhov* is a typical Kashmiri folk-dance performed by two rows of female dancers pacing forwards and backwards in rhythmic sequence, with arms interlocked around the waists of the companions right and left. The *rhov* is performed on festive occasions, the Id in particular. Here are the opening lines of a few popular rhov songs:

retav manza reth kusuy...jaaa...n
śūbavun maaa-hi-ram...zaaan...
Month of months...which one?
Charming *mah e ramzan*. (tr.)

yety-hay oeee-s ram-zaan retyhay draav loeeloe
Here verily Ramzan was; after one month it has left. (tr.)

kati-pholham lo...e golaaaboe loe
ṣaeri-laaagath bo...o golaaaboe-loe.
Where did you blossom, O Rose O?
On head I receive you, O Rose O. (tr.)

dila-boez bo-vanay vila-maaa...shoe...koe
vila-maaa...shoe...koo.
Hear please, heart and soul, my sorrow, Beloved, O,
My sorrow, Beloved, O. (tr.)

naaad-laaayay-myaaani yooosooofooe-voloeee...
I am calling you, my Yusaf, come, O come... (tr.)

(h) *Vīgy-vatsun* (wedding dance song) is a special type of wedding song a Kashmiri Pandit lady used to sing (rather recitatively) on the *vyōg* (*raṅgoli* or the decorative circular design made with a variety of coloured powders on the floor or in the compound) soon after the bridegroom's party left for the bride's paternal house. The little that has remained of this fast vanishing genre is characterized by a haunting cadence appropriate to an unburdening of heart on a festive occasion spoilt by the total absence of many dear ones. The most touching reference, naturally, is to *mālyun* (the paternal house),

moel ta māj chhiy niyāmathā
rath hā vanday mālinyoe...

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Father and mother are a blessing rare;
My blood for you, O Daddy's house. (tr.)

(i) *Shury-bāth* (child song) is a traditional song suiting the emotional need of a child, particularly his zest for play. Some of the most popular songs of this type are nursery rhymes like 'okus bokus', 'ārae mvanjae tārae mvanjae', and 'biṣta biṣta brāryoe' (for both boys and girls); and 'hukuṭā mukutā' and 'tulae lvongun tulān chhes' (for girls only). These play-songs appropriately weave into their fabric a lot of doggerel like: 'broer gayev raṅgarvan raṅgury roṅgus loṭ' meant to be repeated over and over again in a single breath making thereby a mess of the alliterative jingle, shorn of which the line means simply this much:

The cat once went to the dyer's shop,
The dyer dyed his tail.

Another sample, more remarkable for local colour is:

kukas mukas kāṅgur phukas
kukā me dyū nāra-joeṣ.
For Kuka, the flat-nosed, shall I emblaze the *kāṅgur* brazier?
Kuka, give me just a fire-warmth. (tr.)

A typical subclass of the *shury-bāth* or the *ginda-bāth* (Nursery rhyme) popular even with the school-going children of today, is the one which generates a lot of mirth or laughter within the responsive circle of the child. As an instance, 'hvapaleli tshvapa kar, māj gayiy graṭabal' is offered here in a free rendering:

Silence, silence, Sullen Sir;
Your Mammy's gone to the miller.
She'll get you parched grain-powder;
Keep some in the pocket for winter;
Keep some in the cupboard for summer.
Silence, silence, Sullen Sir.

(j) *Manzuly-bāth* (cradlesong) includes *hoe-hoe* (lullaby) and is explicitly meant for the parent rather than the babe who, no doubt, is the primary theme. The song is, in fact, meant to serve a dual purpose, that of entertaining or placating the babe as well as that of articulating parental solicitude and aspiration. This dual purpose is very much there even in nursery rhymes which appear to be pure pacifiers, as in:

kemuty bā kemuṭyoe khasus bā zangae
yina bā Nika-lāl moma-dām mangae...
Insectie, O insectie, get you up his leg;
See that our Nikalal does not ask for breast-feeding.
(tr.)

While appropriately reciting this piece the fond parent affectionately runs his fingers up his darling's leg creating thereby the illusion of an insect running up.

(k) *Mātamy-Bāth* (dirge) is of two types: *marsi* (grief-song) inspired by the heart-rending tragedy that took place at Karbala, and *vān* (bereavement verse) which, till recently, used to be part of the mourning ritual. The Kashmiri *marsī* is replete with moving pieces like the one rendered here:

Say they the Prophet arrived just then;
Weeping Madame Fatima spoke to him:
Father, for three days my Shah Hussain has not eaten,
Hunger has oppressed him.
Daddy dear, today he said something
that set my heart ablaze.
Said he, 'Do children here in Madina
eat after an interval of three days?
Do they live only on a water-sip?
Do all children fall asleep like us on an empty stomach?
How can hunger allow them sleep?
Are they also condemned to a childhood like that of ours?... (tr.)

(5) *Daput* (proverb) has two main varieties:
(a) *Kahāvat* (the tell-tale proverb), and
(b) *Gaṇḍtī* (the conventional saying of axiomatic nature)

The *Kahāvat* becomes intelligible only in terms of some sort of story at its background, as in:

aky tsaṭ sum sās gav kvali
One cut down the culvert, a thousand sank. (tr.)

pilim na tay tsokī gam
Couldn't reach them, the grapes are sour. (tr.)

Phari-tsūras dāri koṇḍ
A fishbone in the beard of one who stole the roasted fish. (tr.)

dvan salāh tren vāvelā
Two agree, three fall out. (tr.)

gari goṭ ta mashīdi tsoeng
Dark at home, endow a lamp to the mosque. (tr.)

bāyis boey puṣt-panāh, bāyis boey duṣmanāh
Brother to brother a backbone, brother to brother a foe. (tr.)

āsun chhu hechhnāvān, nāsun chhu mandachhāvān
'Having' educates, 'having-not' humiliates. (tr.)

akis dazān dār byākh vuṣnāvān atha
One man's beard is ablaze, another warms his hands. (tr.)

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The *kahāvat* naturally, therefore, includes the *talmīhīdaput* (allusive proverb) too, which alludes to some historic, semihistoric or quasi-historic person or situation, such as:

kashīri rūdy kahay gara
Hardly eleven families survived in Kashmir (tr.)
(the allusion being to fanatic persecution.)

nal-rāzun palav
The last remnant of King Nala's raiment. (tr.)

birbalun kaṭh
The ram of Birbal who was alternatively feasted and frightened so as to neutralize the additional weight put on. (tr.)

haramokhuk gosoeny
The hermit of the Haramukha Mount (who persisted in going up the peak everyday, but every morning he found himself back at the foot of the mountain) (reminding us of the Greek parallel.) (tr.)

zīṭhev naryev kheyiv sāl
Longish sleeves, enjoy the feast (tr.)

(The allusion is to Nund Rishi, the Patron Saint of Kashmir, who was admitted to a rich man's feast only when he came a second time better dressed displaying longish sleeves of his imposing robe, while earlier he was driven away by the ignorant gatekeeper, despite the fact that he was invited as the chief guest. Nund Rishi is believed to have silently let loose his longish sleeves into the dainty plate.)

The *gaṇḍatī*, as already pointed out, preserves a conventional saying (of an axiomatic nature) based on some experience, observation or verdict in terms of wit and wisdom, as in:

nov shīn gālān prānis ṣīnas
Fresh snow melts the old away. (tr.)

kvakath nay kany-kath kyā?
If not sinister, why whisper? (tr.)

bata-pāvi tal gatṣi āba-khār gāb
A *pāo* of cooked rice can cover a *kharvār* of defect (tr.)
(A *pāo* and a *kharvār*, respectively, are equivalent to roughly 250g and 80 kg.)

muḍan hunza māji nay prasan
truken hundy gara kitha khasan?
Should not fools' mammies deliver,
how would wise-houses prosper? (tr.)

A remarkable feature of the Kashmiri proverb is a delicious sprinkling of satire and humour, as in:

andra tshunihas thvaka
nebra dopun guma ām
Indoors they spat upon his face;
Outdoors he said, I sweat. (tr.)

dachh kamyū kheyi? Pardev.
mehā dop, pananev mā.
Who ate away the grapes? Outsiders.
I see; I feared our own men did. (tr.)

A number of proverbs have duly assimilated the Sanskritic as well as the Persian heritage and even some old phrases and expressions have been bodily lifted from these classical languages, for verve and pep. Thus we have instances like: 'venāś-kālae veparīta bvad' corresponding to the Sanskrit 'Vināśa-kālē viparīta-buddhiḥ'

(In misfortune we think amiss)
asmāna vatṣ balāy, *khāna e garīb kujāst*?
A calamity came from above
(asking) where's the poor man's hut?

which has absorbed the Persian original retaining the phrase: 'khāna e gharīb kujāst'.

The local colour in these proverbs, however, calls for a very cautious interpretation; for, it would be neither safe nor scientific to judge the national character of a whole people in the light of a proverb or two without taking into consideration the precise context in which the speaker utter these as an effective tool of verbal communication.

(6) *Pratsh* (riddle) may be metrical, metreless, rhymed, partly rhymed or totally unrhymed; but it has to be intriguing as well as amusing in terms of the manner in which it derives its substance from anything around or within, as in:

yām zāv tām khot kānī peṭh
As soon as born he went up the attic. (smoke) (tr.)

āv ta asān drāv ta vadān
Smiling he came, weeping he left. (snow) (tr.)

aki anda siyah bey anda safaed
Black on one side, white on the other. (night, day) (tr.)

manzbāg saras dazān nār
Within the lake the fire ablaze. (samovar) (tr.)

tilavān-kaṭis svanasund tyok
Oilman's son has a gold-*tilakam*. (earthen lamp) (tr.)

aḍ-gaz māmuny dvaḍ-gaz pūts
Half a yard maternal aunt
with a yard and a half long head-covering.
(needle with a thread) (tr.)

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benyi tarihae benyi hund
manza chhes dvas
Sister would cross over to sister,
mud-wall intervenes. (eyes and nose) (tr.)

subahan tsuzong dvahli duzong
shāman bāgy truzong
Fourlegged at dawn, twolegged by day,
threelegged in the evening. (man) (tr.)

khyon con ta trukun
Eating, drinking and chewing. (watermelon) (tr.)

What is known as *Nenda-bāth* (Farmers' chorus) is not, strictly speaking, a literary genre; it is in fact, any song sung in chorus by a group of farmers engaged in agricultural operations. Naturally it can afford to go without accompaniment on musical instruments indispensable for the *chhakur*. Its peculiar style is determined by the operational gestures of the participants led, of course, by one supposed to be a skilled singer. Similar is the case with what is sometimes referred to as *nīry-bāth* (pasture-song) sung by shepherds in far-off pasture-lands. Every shepherd, of course, has his own song-hoard which may include a stray reference to the flock or the pasture too.

Finally, a word about the genres almost extinct now. Of these, *burzameci-hundy būth* (labour-bed songs) are now solely represented by *shoekh ta punasun*, a queer amalgam of the Persian *shauq* (felicitous fervour) with the Sanskritic phrase *punab santu* (may these recur), wishing (in other words) 'many happy returns' of the festive occasion marking safe delivery of the child. The occasion used to be celebrated by women of the household surrounding the newly-born babe and the mother felicitating them on the third day of the delivery by describing flame-circles round their heads with burning birch-bark snatches, and uttering the words 'shoekh ta punasun'. Similarly *mānthri-bāth* (charm-chants) have now to be inferred from snatches like:

artsa-pholū martsa-pholū
tse tsolū duṣmanas rolū
artsa-grain *martsa*-grain
off from you over to foe. (tr.)

which is chanted now, rather playfully, when something rankling in the eye of a child is sought to be removed by repeatedly blowing into it. Another remnant of the charm-chant is noticeable in a telling snatch that once used to be chanted at the time of ritualistic angling. The snatch is:

voloe lāla voloe lāla
kālcen karay nūn-masāla
brinda bamboelā brinda bamboelā
Come dearie, come dearie,
night-time I'll salt and spice thee;
brinda bamboela brinda bamboela. (tr.)

The 'dearie' addressed here is, obviously, the fish that had to be baited for ritualistic purposes; a hangover, perhaps, from the days when Saiva (Tantric) rites were a living tradition in Kashmir.

The bulk of Kashmiri folk literature, even today, is facing the predicament of remaining alive only in print, while a considerable chunk has already perished beyond the possibility of a retrieval or even partial recovery facilitating renovation.

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Malayalam

K. AYYAPPA PANIKER

Folk literature, defined primarily as traditional oral compositions of anonymous authorship or of communal origin, transmitted orally from generation to generation, has had a long and chequered history in Malayalam. Having undergone thematic, verbal and metrical transformations from time to time, they are difficult to date. Some of these pieces have different versions in different places, and today it is impossible to get at an authentic text. Therefore no worthwhile textual criticism can be attempted. Several of them have been salvaged from total oblivion as a result of the efforts of devoted researchers, the pioneers among whom are C. P. Govinda Pillai, Chelanat Achyutha Menon and K. P. Karuppan. Mention should also be made of Kanjiramkulam Kochukrishnan Nadar, G. Sankara Pillai, S. K. Nayar, and Chirakkal Balakrishnan Nair, who have pursued serious research in folk literature studies. Vettiyar Premnath, Thamattatt Govindan Kutty, S. Guptan Nair, G. Bhargavan Pillai, Kilimanoor Viswambharan and V. Anandakuttan Nair have also edited collections of folk-poems and folk-plays. There is no accounting of the poems and tales that have been lost up to the present century when the collection of folk literature got started. There must be innumerable songs, ballads and stories that are still current among the rural population, particularly among the tribals, which are yet to be collected. Folk literature may continue to be produced in out-of-the-way places among the less literate people so that it might be wrong to say that it belongs only to a certain period of past history. The following observations are therefore based on the available collections of folk literature, listed in the bibliography at the end. For the sake of convenience, they are here classified under these heads: (i) ballads, (ii) songs, (iii) tales, (iv) plays, (v) proverbs and aphorisms and (vi) riddles and jokes.

Ballads

Ballads are folk-tales in verse. In Malayalam they are of four major types: (a) puranic ballads, (b) heroic ballads, (c) romantic ballads and (d) street ballads and broadsides.

Puranic Ballads. These are narratives in verse retelling puranic legends, sometimes used for choral recitation at temples or religious festivals. They recount the adventures of puranic deities or heroes. In their narrative style they show the influence of the epics and the Sanskrit puranas. The most popular stories are those that narrate the manifold adventures of Siva and Parvati and some of them deal specifically with the birth of Ganapati or Subrahmanya. The stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata are also sometimes retold in a less elevated style than that of the epics. Strictly speaking, they cannot be included among ballads proper; but they satisfy all the conditions, except that, as in *Māvāratampāṭṭu*, the themes are taken from the Puranas.

Heroic Ballads. These are energetic narratives about heroic characters well-known for their prowess in battle. Men and women, noted for their courage and skill in the use of weapons, try to overcome their enemies and earn undying reputation even at the cost of their life. The loyalty to the clan or *tarwad* (taṛavāṭ), the desire to avenge death and dishonour perpetrated on the dear and the near, and the love of fame are common motifs in these stories. Two of the major series of heroic ballads in Malayalam are (1) the

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ballads of North Malabar known as *Vaṭakkan pāṭṭukaḷ* (Songs of the North) and (2) the ballads of South Travancore known as *Tekkan pāṭṭukaḷ* (Songs of the South). The best of the ballads of the North deal with the members of two households, the Puthooram house and the Manikkoth house. Aromal Chekavar, Unniyarcha and Aromalunni are the chief heroic figures of the former while the supreme hero of the Manikkoth house is Tacholli Otenan (Taccoḷḷi Otēnan). Many are the episodes in which the valour and fencing skills of these characters are displayed. Against a semi-medieval feudal-artistocratic social backdrop, the fate and fame of individuals as well as of whole clans or families are held in suspense; and the sacrifices made by them are made good in terms of honour. The code of honour jealously maintained by Aromal Chekavar (Ārōmal Chēkavar) and his sister Unniyarcha (Uṇṇiyāṛca) indicates not only the social status of the skilled warriors of famous tarwads but also the heights to which even folk poetry had raised its idea of the heroic.

One of the finest accounts of the hero's getting ready for a combat in defence of his honour is to be found in the ballad that describes the fight between Tacholli Otenan and Matilur Kurikkal. Here is the description of Otenan's setting out for the final encounter: the graces of everyday life are preserved even on this tense occasion:

Tacholli Meppayil Kunhi Otenan
Took an oil bath, and rubbed over his body
A mixture of perfume, sandalwood and musk,
And sat down for dinner.
A Kadali plantain leaf was spread.
His sister Tacholli Uniccira
Served him the dinner—
Fine lily-white rice,
A large quantity of pure ghee,
And eleven kinds of vegetable curries.
He fed himself sumptuously on all these
And washed his hands and mouth after it.
He then sat in the south verandah.
Kandasseri Chappan, his squire,
Served him betel to chew.
Chewing and chatting he sat there for a while;
After which he rose and opened his west room,
Where he stood in devotion to family Gods,
And offered them vows if success he got,
And beseeched them to stand on his right.
He then prostrated himself before them,
And went to dress—a full dress.
He wore God-of-Serpent's head ear-ring in ears,
Combed down his hair,
And wore a flower of gold over the crown,
A silk cloth round the loins,
A gold girdle over it,
Gold rings on four fingers,
A bracelet worked in with scenes
From Ramayanam and Bharatam
High up on his right arm,
A gold-handled sword in his right hand,
And a tiger-fighting shield in his left hand.
When coming out thus dressed, he looked
Like melted gold of ten and a half touch!
Like the rising sun in the east!
Like the setting moon in the west!

((tr. W. Logan: *Malabar*)

In the combat with Kurikkal he wins in seven rounds and leaves the arena triumphantly. But forgetting the warning given by his family deity of 'Lōkanāṛ Kāvu', he goes back to the arena to pick up his dagger and then is treacherously shot dead by the enemy's agent. Triumph and tragedy all at once—this thrilling narrative is a good example of the ballads of North Malabar. It recaptures for us a world now entirely lost.

The most outstanding among the ballads of the South is *Iravikuṭṭi Piḷḷai Pōru* (The Battle of Iravikutty Pillai, also known as the Battle of Kaniyakulam). The soldier-hero here is Iravikutty Pillai who disregards the advice of his wife and goes to the battle only to win honour through death. The central character of *Putu Vāta pāṭṭu*, another poem in this category, is Kottayam Kerala Varma. All these Southern ballads are sung by a chorus to the accompaniment of a huge bow, fitted with bells that jingle when the string is struck with a rod. They are called *Villu pāṭṭu* (bow-songs). The songs about the exploits of Chengannur Kunhathi are heroic ballads originating in central Travancore.

Romantic Ballads. Some of the ballads in the group *Vaṭakkan pāṭṭukaḷ* are better described as stories of love. The story of Palattu Koman is perhaps to be put under this head. It tells how Koman of Kappulli Palattu house falls in love with Unniyamma of 'Toṇṇūrān' house, which has active feuds with his own tarwad. By her ingenuity and tact, Unniyamma manages to protect Koman from the anger of her own people, and finally they get married. Perhaps the recently published ballad of *Matilēri Kaṅṅi* could also be called a ballad of love and romance.

Street Ballads and Broadsides. These are poetic versions of exciting incidents taking place from time to time which some unsophisticated poet turns into verse on the spur of the moment. *Mallan Piḷḷaye Āṅa Kuttikkonna Katha* (The Story of How the Elephant Gored Mallan Pillai to Death) is a plain ballad of this type. Except for rare flashes these are not marked by any great creative imagination. These ballads have shorter lives than the others already discussed.

Songs

Songs of folk origin are innumerable and endlessly varied.

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There are songs for almost any occasion in life. It would be difficult to make a comprehensive list or exhaustive classification of them. These songs are perhaps the greatest achievements of folk culture—linking literature with music, dance, ritual, social customs and daily recreation. They are connected with all types of occupation and they are also the nearest to the Dravidian source of all folk literature in Malayalam. They have their own poetics and sociology: social reality influences poetics, and poetics controls the way social life is projected in it. The majority of these songs fall into one or the other of the following groups: (i) religious hymns and prayer songs, (ii) ritual invocations and recitatives (iii) songs of recreation accompanying sports and games, (iv) work songs, (v) songs for social occasions and (vi) nursery songs and lullabies. These songs are important repositories of the metrical resources of Malayalam poetry as well as exemplifications of the native type of music known as *sōpāna saṅgīta*. Linguistically too, these songs are perhaps closest to the basic pre-Aryan cultural mores.

Religious Hymns and Prayer Songs. *Pṛārthana* (prayer) and *Kīrtana* (hymnal) songs must have been there even before Malayalam evolved as a separate language from the proto-Dravidian, and several songs are about pre-Aryan deities or ancestors deified. The mother goddess in these songs, as in the ritual songs, may take the form of almost any of the female deities: Kali or Bhadrakali or Parvati or Prakṛti (Nature) herself. A large and characteristically indigenous group is that of hymns in praise of Ayyappan, the Lord of Sabarimala. The Ayyappan cult has ramified in several directions: the very 'slogans' shouted by pilgrims on their way to the hilltop temple have deep and primitive echoes. There are songs about deities in all temples, apart from general hymns about Vishnu, Siva, Bhagavati, Ganapati, Saraswati, Rama and Krishna. Some of them briefly retell the stories of Ramayana or Bhagavata. Several of these *stutis* or songs of praise are sung by members of the Pāṇan and Vēlan communities. Quite a few are used for daily prayers at home. There are prayer songs belonging to Christians and Muslims too, though comparatively fewer.

Ritual Invocations and Recitatives. As part of the festivities at temples or homes or sacred places like the *kāvə* (sacred grove), songs are sung invoking the blessings of particular deities most closely associated with the place or the time of the festival. The most important of these is the *Tōṭṭam* songs. The word *Tōṭṭam* means a kind of invocation that gives life to the images, or transforms objects of worship into gods themselves, or actors into what they stand for. There are any number of *Tōṭṭam* songs in Malayalam associated with numerous gods, goddesses, spirits, ancestors, heroes, even concepts; when the *Tōṭṭam* is sung, the image is supposed to come to life. In *Kōlam Tuḷḷal*, *Paṭayaṇi* and *Teyyam*, various characters, supernatural as well as subnatural, are impersonated. One represents the god of death, another goddess Bhairavi, another a Yakshi (fairy sprite), yet another a bird and so on. Huge headgears are worn and the actors dance vigorously to the accompaniment of special drums and almost become possessed at the climax of a frenzy through wild rhythmic beats and songs sung in chorus at full-throated ease. One of the most important *Tōṭṭams* is about the killing of Daruka demon by Bhadrakali. Daruka may represent the dread disease of smallpox while Kali may represent the supernatural agency that is believed to prevent the epidemic from spreading. Folk belief is still very deeply entrenched in these, in spite of the spread of science and rationalism. For each of the *Teyyam* figures or masks, there are separate *Tōṭṭams*. Examples are *Kariyāttan Tōṭṭam*, *Wynad Kulavan Tōṭṭam*, *Muccilōṭṭu Bhagavati Tōṭṭam*, *Viṣṇumūrti Tōṭṭam*, *Poṭṭan Teyyam Tōttam*, etc. In *Paṭayaṇi* also we have exquisite invocatory songs for Yakshi, Pakshi Kalan, Ganapati, Bhairavi, etc.

There are a number of ritual songs associated with semi-religious performances such as exorcism, black magic, treatment of diseases by *mantras*, display of spiritual powers and shaman-like possession and purification from the evil eye. etc. *Tiyyāṭṭu* is a ritual dance where Bhadrakali is invoked through a top-to-bottom (*kēśādipādam*) description of the divine figure.

I bow to the holy tresses with the hue of darkness
I bow to the fiery eye and the *tilak* on the holy forehead
I bow to the bright eyes, the nose and the cheek. (tr.)

Songs of Recreation. These songs are mainly for secular entertainment. Love-songs, songs about sports and games like boat-songs, songs associated with the national harvest festival of Kerala, i.e. Onam in August–September, etc. come under this category. The greatest variety in theme and tone may be seen in this group of songs. Women have their light dances like *Kaikoṭṭikkaḷi* which are accompanied by suitable songs. *Talayāṭṭam*, *Thumpi uḷiyal*, the application of *Mailāñci* (henna) to turn the palms of women's hands reddish—these are activities performed along with the singing of appropriate songs. Onam songs are an important subgroup here. There are songs about flower-gathering for onam decoration; songs expressing anxiety about how to celebrate Onam which seems to have come all too soon; songs describing the days when Maveli ruled over the land, etc. A bright vision about a land of plenty, overflowing with love and joy, is expressed in what may be roughly termed the national song of the Malayalis:

When Maveli rules over the land,
All the people are an equal band.
When they live thus in all joy
There is no danger from anywhere.
No theft is there, no cheating,

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No one tells even a small lie.
All instruments of measurement
Are kept in perfect accord. (tr.)

Songs of love sparkle with joy and confidence. Here is a song addressed to a dark girl:

Dark girl, O dark-haired girl,
Someone has risen in the east for you.
Grains were sown in the cleared woods,
The birds then came to eat up the grains,
The girl came to keep the birds away,
The bangles jingled when the hands waved,
The bangles jingled and the birds flew away,
The birds have flown across the hills. (tr.)

Another song addressed to the dark girl goes as follows:

O dark girl, once
When I couldn't see you
I was upset and turned myself into a beetle.
Turning myself into a beetle
I went to the porch of a *paḷḷi*
When I went to the porch of a *paḷḷi*
The child of the flower-hill
Threw flowers at me.... (tr.)

Perhaps the most popular couplet expressing love in the folk idiom is the famous boat-song (vañcippāṭṭu) of the girl dreaming of her lover in separation:

When the waves dance in the Vaikom backwaters
I remember my beloved.
My beloved, my valiant hero,
My most dear and handsome beloved. (tr.)

Festival songs and drinking songs also come under this category. Every festival has its own forms, like Tiruvātira, a festival exclusively for womenfolk.

Work-songs. The largest number of occupational folk-songs in Malayalam are naturally connected with rice cultivation. There are songs used at the time of sowing the seeds, planting the seedlings, pumping out water with a wheel, and harvesting. Some of these are so pronouncedly dominated by rhythm that choral paterns are repeated like a refrain by the members of the chorus to keep time. Only the leader recites all the lines.

Teyyam tiṅam tiṅam teyyam tāro
or
Attinuṅtam tey teyttiṅumtāre-tey tey
or
Eppa—Ēlēla—Eppeṅṭappa
or
Mālam māloreyya
or
Tiyōttinumtō tiṅumtiṅum tāra-taka
Teyyittiṅumtō tiṅumtiṅum tāra

There are infinite variations of the oral rhythmic formula like this to suit the different occasions and the varying moods. There is for instance a song expressing the displeasure and complaint of a labourer kept too late into the evening by the employer just to exploit his services:

The time is gone, the time is gone,
The water fowl too has gone its way,
Behind the pineapple bush.
When I went there
I was made to do the fence;
When I went there
I was made to dig the pond;
When I went there
I was made to thatch the roof;
They gave me a little toddy
And made me work unto death.
They gave me half a green coconut
And made me work unto death.

The time is gone, the time is gone,
The water fowl too has gone its way,
Behind the pineapple bush. (tr.)

Songs for Social Occasions. Among these are marriage songs, songs to get the bedchamber door opened, songs for keening by professionals, etc. The Christian and Muslim contributions to this group are very significant. *Vātiltura pāṭṭu Mailāñci pāṭṭu* and *Oppana* are excellent examples. A Christian wedding song requesting the bridegroom to open the door of the bedchamber may be quoted:

The bridegroom closed the door
of the bridal chamber where the bride was,
O my bridegroom,
whose fame is everywhere,
The mother-in-law and other womenfolk
out of sheer joy
Have come to the door of the bridal chamber
whose door you have shut.
The great mother wearing the great necklace
Has come to knock at the door
With her coral-ringed fingers,
The mother-in-law has knocked at the door
With her flower-ringed fingers,
The sister-in-law has knocked at the door
With great affection,
Your friend too has knocked at the door
With a lamp in her hand.

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Your own mother has knocked at the door.
We will give you brass vessels,
We will give you a round tray,
We will give you silk cloth,
A splendid canopy;
We will give you bed and bedding,
We will give you a lamp to see around,
My son, dear bridegroom,
Open the door of the bridal chamber. (tr.)

The Hindus have wedding songs about Sita, Parvati and Rugmini to be sung on the auspicious occasion of the marriage ceremony or later. The bride and bridegroom are teased pleasingly by those who sing the marriage songs. This adds to the festive mood. The Jews of Cochin too have a few marriage songs in Jewish-Malayalam.

Nursery Songs and Lullabies. When cradles go out of fashion cradlesongs may cease to be used. But songs putting the wakeful child to sleep are some of the tenderest expressions of human love. Lullabies provide a musical background inducing the child to sleep. When he wakes up he has to be entertained with other songs like nursery rhymes. They carry little by way of literal or metaphysical meaning, but their sound symbolism is striking. Usually lullabies are set to some tune, easy to catch, and useful for any nursing mother.

Rāriram rārirām rārō—rārī
Rārirām rārirām rārō.

This echoes the swinging rhythm of the cradle pushed and pulled back and forth.

Tales

Folk-tales in Malayalam are still largely in oral circulation —very little work has so far been done on their collection, processing and publication. A good many have been retold by Kottarathil Sankunny (Koṭṭārattil Śaṅkuṇṇi, 1855–1937) in the eight parts of his *Aitihyamāla* (String of Legends, 1909–34). Several tales relate legends about persons and places. Among these are the stories of the twelve children born of a Pariah woman which trace the common origin of several castes and subcastes in Kerala. The people of Kerala are thus said to have descended from a Brahmin who-married a Pariah, thereby illustrating not only the oneness of all mankind but also the meaninglessness of caste distinctions. Through these tales one gets an insight into the core of the life of the people of Kerala. There are also scores of tales narrated by 'Chakyars' (Cākyāṛ) in the course of their performances of *kūttu* and *kūṭiyāṭṭam*. *Saṅghakkaḷi* and other folk theatre forms also have characters who relate old tales or invent new tales on the spur of the moment. Some collections of stories narrated by the Nambudiris on their way to Trivandrum to take part in the festival of *Muṛajapam* (festival celebrated once in six years) have been published which bear witness to their sense of humour and instantaneous inventiveness. But hundreds of folk-tales remain to be written down and published. When the tribal tales handed down by word of mouth are finally collected, they may throw fresh light on Kerala history and anthropology.

Folk-plays

One distinctive feature of folk literature is that there is no watertight division into poetry, drama, story and song. All these get mixed up and all are connected with ritual, religion and dance. Kerala folklore, for all its indigenous qualities, is greatly influenced by a number of cultures, Indian and foreign, and is thus perhaps more cosmopolitan than other regional folk art forms. As Percy Macqueen observes: 'It is probable that for several centuries a constant struggle was going on between these cultures, with the result that even the religion of the people was in a state of flux and uncertainty. Other influences may also have been at work, arising out of trade relations with Europe and China and of the movements of peoples' (Percy Macqueen, Foreword in Raghavan, M.D., *Folk Plays and Dances of Kerala*, The Ramavarma Archaeological Society, Trichur, 1947, pp. v–vi). In no part of folk culture do we find this mingling of cultures as profusely as in Kerala's richly varied and highly colourful theatrical traditions. The Dravidian, the Aryan, the Chinese, the European, the Hebraic, and the Arab elements are so well merged into it that it would be idle to separate each strand. The native tradition is itself so cosmopolitan that its homogeneity and heterogeneity have infinite sources of great variety.

The folk-plays are highly improvisational and therefore the literary text is comparatively thin and is often only an excuse for endless improvisations on the stage. *Kākkāriśśi*, *Porāṭṭu*, *Caviṭṭu nāṭakam*, *Śāstṛakaḷi*, *Teyyam*, *Paṭayaṇi*, *Kōlam Tuḷḷal*, *Pūrakkaḷi*, *Tiruvātira kaḷi*, *Kuṛattiyāṭṭam*, *Aiyyaṛkaḷi*, *Kōthāmuri*, *Pāvakkūttu*, and the various tribal performances are basically dance-musicals with acting or *abhinaya* for rendering the literary text with elaborate interpretation. Several castes have their own favourite items. But on festive occasions they all get performed. In classical drama there are severe restrictions on the caste of the participants; for instance only Chakyar and Nambiyar communities participate in *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*. Kathakali has adopted many elements from folk-dance, -drama and music.

Kākkāriśśi is one of the most lively of folk-dramas. The central character in all these improvised performances is Sundaran Kākkān along with his two wives (Kākkāttis), a master (or Tampīan), a hunter (vēṭan), etc. Sundaran Kākkān has to be infinitely resourceful and imaginative

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order to keep the audience entertained. He may dance, sing songs, perform somersaults on the stage; he must provide witty retorts and replies to the questions shot at him by the vocal musician seated off-stage. The basic sentiment evoked is comic. This is also more or less true of *Śāstrakaḷi* or *Cāttirāṅkam*, where again there is a central comic character who is the focus of all attention. *Kākkāriśśi* is entertainment for the lower classes, while *Cāttirāṅkam* is mostly for the upper classes, chiefly the Nambudiris and their kith and kin. The Christian folk play is chiefly *Caviṭṭu Nāṭakam*, a musical dance drama usually drawing upon Biblical stories or European history. *Kārelmān Caritṛam* (The Story of Charlemagne) and *Allēśu Nāṭakam* are examples. The Christians also have *Māṛgam kaḷi* which dramatizes Christian themes while the performances have certain similarities with *Saṅghakkaḷi*. The Muslims have *Kōlkaḷi*, etc. which are more like dance than like drama. Syriac or Latin expressions may be found in the early Christian folk-plays, while Muslim songs abound in Arabic expressions which make the language a special dialect.

Proverbs and Aphorisms

Perhaps the earliest specimens of oral compositions by anonymous authors or of collective authorship are the proverbs. They reflect the common wisdom of the race based on the geography, history, customs and beliefs of the people involved. Malayalam proverbs thus contain ideas or observations of universal validity presented in terms of the objects of experience within the reach of the Keralites and expressed within the resources of the Malayalam language. Proverbs too, like folk-songs, get modified both in meaning and in linguistic form, yet they are formula-like expressions couched in the idiom natural to the language and therefore tend to preserve many linguistic features. Proverbs in this sense represent the collective and conservative response to life. They indicate a group reaction, but is readily available to the individual user, whether speaker or writer. They may be said to be pre-literary or sub-literary. The following examples throw light on the Malayalis' pet obsessions:

(a) There is no chaff in a proverb.
(b) The words of the elders and ripe gooseberry
Bitter in the beginning, but sweet at the end.
(c) After lunch, lie down even on thorn;
After dinner, walk half a mile. (tr.)

Riddles and Jokes

Riddles (*Kaṭam katha*) reflect the intellectual complexity of the community that produces them. What is most interesting about them is their ingenious solution which outwits the riddle itself. One of the most famous Malayalam riddles is about the man who would marry a girl only under certain conditions. He would expect a square meal everyday with a hundred curries, and after the meal he would eat three people, and then four people must carry him when he relaxes. A clever girl agreed to satisfy all the conditions: she would give him ginger curry made of the juice of ginger (with a pun on the word nūṛu meaning a hundred on the one hand and juice on the other): after the meal, she would give him three things—betel leaf, arecanut and tobacco—to chew; and would make him lie on a cot with four legs to support it. Examples of other riddles are:

(a) All children of a mother wear caps—arecanut bunch.
(b) A thousand white chilly buds blossomed—stars in the sky.
(c) It will jingle and giggle, but lie dead on the beam—bunch of keys. (tr.)

The people of Kerala are well known for their sense of humour. The witty dialogues between the 'Tampran' and the 'Kakkan' in the *Kākkāriśśi* play and the jokes and tall tales narrated by the clown in *Śāstṛakaḷi* have already been commented on. There are also absurd and surrealistic jokes. Pun, malapropism, spoonerism, comedy of errors, retort and verbal jugglery are all quite common. Several of the jokes in popular circulation have later been appropriated by individual writers. Some examples are:

(a) A woman of Cochin got a moustache.
(b) The mouth of the backwaters caught fire.
(c) Two flies were crushed between two 'gōpurams' (gateway towers). (tr.)

The Nambudiri jokes are particularly famous and are also numerous. The story is told of a Nambudiri landlord who being in need of money wrote a letter to his tenant asking for a few rupees, but having no one at hand to take the letter to the tenant, took it himself and made a personal delivery. When asked why he wrote the letter at all if he were coming in person, the Nambudiri coolly said it was because of the urgency. Folk jokes are often of a broad and bawdy character: there are numerous expressions dealing with breaking wind ('competitive farting'), excretion ('relieve oneself out of fear'), hen-pecking ('husband dancing to the tunes of his wife'), etc.

Conclusion

In variety, vitality, realism, rhythm and sense of humour, there is no branch of Malayalam literature that can compete with its folk literature. Folk poetry (narratives and lyrics), folk-tales, folk-plays and minor folk forms like proverbs and riddles are the basic and permanent expression of the Malayali racial genius. The Brahmins, the Nairs, the so-

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called 'avarnas', the Muslims, the Christians, the Jews and the innumerable tribal groups have all contributed their share to its growth in the most unstinted measure. It is a true mirror held up to all the richness of life in Kerala. It keeps the pulse of the language, supplies new metres and rhythms and provides elbow room for periodic expansion of vocabulary out of indigenous resources. Folk literature is the very life-breath of the people of Kerala. No attempt at industrialization or urbanization can ever totally destroy it. It is perpetually reborn, and, in turn, sustains several other forms, not only of literature, but of Fine Arts of all kinds. It is the true barometer of the Malayali aesthetic sensibility.

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Marathi

CHANDRASHEKHAR JAHAGIRDAR

General

Communal and oral in its origin and transmission, folk literature in Marathi has always been a powerful expression of the folk culture in Maharashtra. It displays a very close relationship to myth and archetypes, while at the same time, it is also a record of the life of rites, customs and rituals as lived by a whole community. Since Marathi folk literature is vast and full of variety, the present article seeks to provide a short introduction to it under four headings: (i) folk-songs (ii) folk-tales, (iii) folk-drama and (iv) riddles and proverbs.

Folk-songs

Occurring in a number of cultural contexts, Marathi folk-songs have a rich variety of content and purpose. There are ceremonial songs, ritualistic songs, festival songs, labo[illegible] songs and devotional songs. There are songs depict[illegible] emotional states and also songs with a strong narrat[illegible] dimension. One major type of folk-song, known as [illegible] *ovī-gīta* is associated with women. The popular *ovi* i[illegible] stanzaic form with a specific number of letters in e[illegible] metrical foot, the number of metrical feet being also fi[illegible] It uses such poetic devices as rhyme, alliteration, f[illegible] grounding through repetition, etc. It lends itself easil[illegible] music. Sung by women doing household chores like gr[illegible] ing corn, or lulling the infant to sleep and in a host of o[illegible] domestic contexts, the *ovī-gīta* is an expression of [illegible] feminine sensibility *par excellence*. It addresses itself, am[illegible] other things, to familial relationships. But with its de[illegible] of ordinary social life and a wealth of allusions to custo[illegible] mores and prevalent beliefs, it has become a signifi[illegible] record of socio-cultural reality as seen or experienced

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women. The following *ovi* expresses for instance, a recurrent theme: the plight of woman in a male-dominated society.

Let one not be born
As a daughter, O God!
She is offered in marriage,
That too, after supplication,
All the toil of bringing her up
Comes to nothing! (tr.)

There are of course other songs sung by women which cover a whole spectrum of emotions: ranging from a woman's love for her husband, the pride she takes in his relatives and also her nostalgia for her maternal house where she has spent all her life before marriage. The following translation is of a song which narrates the story of a married girl. She undergoes a great deal of persecution at the hands of her husband's relatives and has been forced to cut off her contacts with her parental house. In a mood which combines nostalgia with loneliness, she narrates her tragic situation to a bird, requests him to act as a messenger and to come back with news from her mother's place. She gives him her ring as a mark of identification and tells him emotionally:

With your tinkle of toe-ornaments, O bird!
Go to my mother's home!
My maternal mansion has a sandalwood tree
On which rubies shine with a dazzling light,
Guarded by a cobra with the figure of ten on its hood,
And a train of fairies in its service.
When you reach there, show them this ring
And tell them see this squatting *nandi*
Dear brother bird, go to my brother
And narrate my intent to my father. (tr.)

The song is a reflection on the social position of woman; it also shows the ability of the folk imagination to incorporate nature in human experience.

Feminine songs are by no means the only significant part of Marathi folk literature. There are other songs inextricably bound up with the institutional life of the community. Potaraj, Gondhali, Bhutya, Vasudev, Jogati, Vaghya Muralī—were all devotees of different gods and goddesses. Their role and status were fixed in relation to specific social institutions with the result that for generations together, with their ability to sing, dance and narrate, they played a major role in the communicative context of folk culture. The songs sung by them belong to the type known as the ballad, exemplifying features like narrative content, refrain, and incremental repetition. To give only one example, Potaraj is a devotee of the village goddess Mariai —a variant of the Dravidian goddess Māriamman. Any displeasure on the part of this goddess was supposed to bring epidemics like cholera, smallpox, chicken-pox, etc. At the beginning of the monsoon, therefore, the Potaraj would act as a mediator, propitiate the goddess on behalf of the village-folk and sing devotional, ritualistic songs dealing with different themes. The following free translation of a Potaraj song indicates the extent to which the folk imagination carried the process of anthropomorphism—ascription of human attributes to gods. The song narrates the story of the quarrel between Siva and Parvati while playing draughts and their final patching up of it. Sambudeva and Girija are other names for Siva and Parvati respectively.

At the game of draughts
Girija counted 'eight, nine',
Shambudev warned, 'Girija, don't play foul'
The game of draughts was in full swing
The shrewd Parvati closed Shankar's eyes
Innocent Shankar, fully engrossed in the game,
Lost his Nandi to Girija's claim.
Sulking, he left for the mountains in a huff
And started burning incense in puffs.
Loving Girija assumed the form of a Bhil woman
And told Shankar, 'Besides you, I have no one!
Sulking Shankar sat on the side of a lake;
Loving Girija went there to embrace her mate. (tr.)

Durga Bhagvat (b. 1910), who is an authority on folk literature, points out the striking absence of love-theme in Marathi folk-songs. This is all the more surprising when we find that other folk literatures in India abound in love-songs. But unfettered love associated with youthful passions does not seem to have found a place in Marathi folk poetry. Whatever love-poetry there is, it deals with the theme of marital love in its domestic context, extolling and idealizing virtues like woman's fidelity, obedience and the quality of acceptance. There are some reasons for this. The tradition of *Madhura-bhaktī* did not strike deep roots in Maharashtra and, with the strong impact of the Bhakti cult, love-theme was subsumed under mythology whose orientations were chiefly spiritual. The following song, found among the Agrīs, must be regarded as exceptional rather than representative.

Come on Sāḷu, let us elope.
We will live in the woods and mountains,
Break all barriers,
Build a small hut,
A small hut for only the two of us,
Two of us will live together
And eat fresh cucumber. (tr.)

Folk-tales

The tradition of folk-tales in Marathi has affiliations reaching back to the larger Indian tradition of the Vedas, the

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epics and the puranas; Gunadhya's *Brahtkathā* composed in the Paisachi language, Vishnu Sarma's *Pañcatantra*, the Buddhist *Jātakas* and the Jain *Cūrṇis*. The variety of folk-tales in Marathi is immense. There are mythical tales, fairy-tales, migratory legends, animal tales, creation stories, cumulative tales, etc. These tales are traditional vehicles of folk wisdom orally transmitted from one generation to another. In every folk literature, some sections of the people are well known for their art of story-telling. In Rajasthan they are the Ravels and the Bhats, in Gujarat, they are the Bhopis and the Charan. Similarly, in Maharashtra, the Vasudevas, and the Gondhaḍis have a rich collection of tales at their disposal. The narration of tales, however, is far more pervasive. One particular form of folk-tale associated with women narrators is known as *Kahāṇi*. The *Kahāṇi* is a ritualistic tale, associated with religious observance on certain specific days of the year. Employing a mixture of prose and poetry, it uses short sentences making for an effective narrative rhythm. Its paragraphs are structured like stanzas with recurrent syntactic patterns. Its opening and closing sentences are always formulaic and it always has a happy ending. The ritual with which it is associated is not supposed to yield real rewards unless the story is told and listened to by others.

Besides *Kahāṇi*, there are other folk-tales. Some of them signify one major tale-type: the love between human beings and supernatural creatures. One such tale, as reported by Durga Bhagwat, is found among the Mahars of the Konkan region in Maharashtra. Once Arjuna saw Balurani dancing in the court of Indra. They fell deeply in love with each other. Fearing Indra's wrath, Balurani transformed herself into a mango-seed. Arjuna fixed that seed in his thigh and descended on the earth. Balurani then went to a well for her bath, laying down the condition that Arjuna should not see her in the nude. Arjuna could not resist the temptation, but the moment he looked at her, he fell dead. Balurani was very sad. She went to the well to bring water and sprinkle it on Arjuna's body so that he would get back his life. Meanwhile, a fisherwoman had also come to the same well to draw water. She saw Arjuna and fell in love with him. She took Balurani's clothes and ornaments and pushed her into the well. Using the water that Balurani had brought, she breathed life into Arjuna's dead body. When he saw the fisherwoman, Arjuna thought that his wife had undergone physical transformation because of his act of disobedience. Later, he saw a lotus in the well. Admiring its beauty, he brought it home. His wife crushed it, mixed it with rice and threw the rice on a dung-hill. Balurani became alive and told the whole story to Arjuna. Arjuna promised the fisherwoman that he would marry her. He invited all the townsfolk. The real Balurani then made her appearance and the fisherwoman was thrown into the well. Indra forgave Arjuna and offered him his hospitality.

The tale, a folk variation on the Rigvedic story of Urva and Pururava, exemplifies the following motifs: (i) a human hero in search of a beautiful superhuman creatur such as an *Apsara* with whom marriage is possible onl after fulfilling certain conditions; (ii) a low-caste rival wh kills the *apsara* and impersonates her by wearing he clothes and ornaments; (iii) the heroine coming back t life in the form of a flower or fruit to which the hero i attracted; (iv) clarification of the mystery; (v) union of th hero and heroine, accompanied by the rival woman' death. Variants of this tale are found in Bengal, in Santha folk literature and among the tribal people of Chot Nagpur.

Another folk-tale found all over Maharashtra is abou an orphan girl called Sonasakhali. She has seven brother and whenever they are away from home, their wives tormen and harass her in different ways. She is asked to wash ric and even if a single grain of it falls in the river, she is take to task. Finally, a fish helps her by retrieving the grain fo her. Then the wives order her to bring faggot without usin a rope to tie the sticks together. A snake comes to her help encircling the bundle. The wives then set her anothe impossible task: of fetching water in a leaking pitcher Sonasakhali starts crying. Frogs come to her rescue b covering the leak. One day the brothers' wives make he climb a *bori* tree; then they ask her to throw down som of the fruit and, after spreading thorns under the tre they leave her alone. Later, her brothers come and s under the tree. Sonsakhali's tears fall upon them. The recognize their sister, bring her down and by way of punish ment, sentence their wives to death. Variants of this stor are found in Gujarati, Tamil, Malayalam—and even i German: a fact which testifies to the presence of certai cultural universals in folk-tales.

Yet one more form of the folk-tale, known as the migra tory legend, is the story of Chandrahasa. A migrator legend, like that of the Wandering Jew, for instance, has definite, though not easily identifiable, place of origin, b is found in distant places with several localized variation The migration of the tale does not affect its sequence narrative units. The story of Chandrahasa originated Maharashtra. Briefly, it is about a young man, Chandr hasa, who, born under an auspicious star, survives seve conspiracies of enemies. Finally, the young man takes the addressee a letter which carries instructions to bri about his own death. On the way, he meets a girl wh changes the contents of the letter. Chandrahasa marr her and thus acquires fortune and power. His ene falls into the trap he had set for others. Scholars li Winternitz, Ketkar and Weber have noted differe migratory versions of this original Marathi folk-tale places as far as Europe. One feature of this legend, chan ing the contents of the letter, occurs in Shakespeare *Hamlet*.

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Folk-drama

A distinctive form of folk-drama known as the *Tamāśa* emerged during the Peshwa period of Maratha history. The form, however, had its roots in a longer tradition going back to several varieties of dramatic entertainment performed on certain religious occasions. The *Daśāvatāra*, the *Laḷit*, the *Gondhaḷa* are examples of the pre *Tamāśa* forms of folk-drama.

As the name itself suggests, *Daśāvatār* refers to a dramatic performance dealing with the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, though the last two *avatārs*—Buddha and Kalki—were hardly dramatized, while the Kūrma and Varāha incarnations were only briefly presented. *Daśāvatār* has been a highly popular folk-play in the Konkan region of Maharashtra. *Daśāvatāri* plays were performed at annual fairs associated with sacred places. They bear a good deal of resemblance to the *Kṛṣṇalīla* and *Ramalīla* in the north, in that events from the lives of Krishna and Rama are selected and dramatized. The performance begins with the *Sūtradhāra* singing a refrain to invoke Ganapati and Saraswati, who then appear on the stage and retire after blessing the actors. Then the play proper begins, presenting dramatic events drawn from the various incarnations of Vishnu. A regular fixture is the character of the *Rākṣasa*, *Śaṅkasura* who stole the *Vedas*, hid them in the sea and was killed by Vishnu in his incarnation as a fish. The performance ends invariably with a battle between the gods and the *Rākṣasas*. *Daśāvatāri* plays thus combined entertainment with religious instruction, emphasizing God's role as saviour in a universal crisis.

Another pre-*Tamāśa* variety of folk-plays was the *Laḷit* which also combined entertainment with edification. Like *Daśāvatāri* plays, the *Laḷit* also dramatized events chosen from the life-history of divine creatures, with the difference, however, that it had its origin in the *Bharud*. The *Bharud* was a highly allegorical song which apparently had a secular meaning, but which encoded in its metaphorical structure a significant spiritual message. Metaphors used in *Bharuds* were drawn from games, animals, daily chores, ordinary social life and festivals. Thus in some *Bharuds*, God appears in the guise of mace-bearer, an usher, a soothsayer, etc. This inherent dramatic element in the *Bharud* led to the performance of the *Laḷit*. The *Laḷit* had, apart from the *Sūtradhāra* and the usual initial invocation, a Vaghya and a Muraḷi, male and female devotees respectively of Malharī, a variant form of Siva.

The *Gondhaḷ* was yet another form of folk-play, chiefly religious in character. The term 'Gondhaḷi' refers to devotees of goddesses who use musical instruments and sing devotional songs by way of propitiating the goddess. The performance of *Gondhaḷ* was in two parts. The first part would consist of devotional songs, punctuated with a commentary. The second part consisted of a story narrated in a highly dramatic manner. It was quite common in Maharashtra to arrange a performance of a *Gondhaḷ* as part of a wedding celebration. The dramatic talent of the Gondhalis played a significant role in the early period of Maratha history, Shivaji himself was a great devotee of Goddess Bhavani. With their dramatic talent and mimetic skill, the Gondhali gave an effective rendering of songs of devotion and heroism, and thus contributed to the general awakening in Maharashtra.

Thus the *Daśāvatār*, the *Laḷit*, and the *Gondhaḷ* are all, in a sense, a prefigurement of the most distinctive form of Marathi folk-drama, the *Tamāśa*, which flourished particularly in the later Peshwa period. In its early phase, a *Tamāśa* troupe—known as 'phad'—consisted of (i) a leader, (ii) a *dholaki*—drum player, (iii) *soṅgādyā*—a comic character, (iv) a few persons to provide accompaniment and support in singing, (v) a good-looking boy to dance in feminine attire. Later, some important changes were effected. The feminine roles came to be played by women and the *vaga*, meaning improvised dialogues unfolding a story dealing with a legendary or historical theme, was added. The *Tamāśa* then came to have the following major components: (a) the *Gaṇa*: invocation of God Ganapati by singing songs in praise of him; (b) the *Gauḷaṇa*: this part dramatized events from the life of Krishna; Krishna and his friends teasing milk-maids on their way to the market was a scene combining playful sex with humour; (c) the *Lavaṇi*: a highly erotic song to the tune of which the boy in feminine dress would dance. The main theme of the *Lavaṇi* was erotic love in all its aspects; (d) the *Vaga*: inclusion of the *Vaga* was the addition of a distinctly dramatic dimension to the *Tamāśa*. As has been noted, the early *Tamāśa* did not have the *Vaga* in it. It had, however, another feature known as *Kalagi—Turā*. Neither *Kalagi* nor *Turā* is in fact a Marathi word, but they signify two groups into which the *Tamāśa* players had divided themselves. The controversy about the superiority of Siva and Sakti was responsible for this rift. Devotees of Sakti were known as Kalagiwale and devotees of Siva were called Turewale. The rift between these groups was presented in a highly dramatic manner known as 'Savāl-Javāb' (question-answer). This meant a sharp exchange of repartees between the two groups. One group would present certain riddles in the form of songs. These riddles were essentially spiritual in nature. Songs which presented these riddles were known as 'bhedik kavan', literally, a penetrating poetic composition! The other group would try to find the enigmatic spiritual meanings of the riddle. If it failed to do that, it had to accept defeat. This 'Kalagi-Tura' tradition of 'question and answer', of a hot spiritual debate, was in great vogue until 1850. It must however be noted that this tradition, though it had its roots in folk practices, was slowly absorbed in the larger bardic and religious traditions.

As a folk-play, then, the *Tamāśa* offered a combination of

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eroticism and spiritual knowledge. In its later phase, however, the Kalagi-Tura tradition declined, and today it hardly exists. In its place, the *Vaga* has assumed more contemporary orientations. Even if the story chosen for it is drawn from legends and myths, there is always some commentary on the contemporary world. With the scope it provides for visual imagination, its proximity to the life and language of the common man and its quality of great improvisation, the *Tamāśa* has always been a highly powerful form of folk-drama in Maharashtra. The success of a modern play like Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghāśirām Kotvāla*, which makes apt use of the resources of folk-theatre as found in the *Daśāvatār*, the *Laḷit*, the *Tamāśa*, etc. testifies to the vital and continuing tradition of folk-drama in Maharashtra.

Riddles and Proverbs

The riddle implies the presence of two persons: the one who asks a question and the one who answers it. Secret meaning couched in succinct metaphorical terms is the essence of the riddle. Anyone who wants to solve the riddle must unravel this secret meaning. With its enigmatic meaning, pithy syntax and catchy rhythm, the riddle is at once a source of amusement and instruction. Several forms of the riddle are found in Marathi folk literature. (i) Though generally rare, the ritualistic riddle is found, even today, among the Varali aborigines of the Thana district. Men dance around the heap of newly-gathered harvest on which the image of the deity is kept. A riddle contest is then held in which the dancers are given riddles to solve. These riddles are based on stories from the epics. One such riddle, quoted below, refers to the creation of Sita's son out of reeds; hence his name Lahu, meaning the Reed-Child.

You should be social and mix with people
Now out with the truth!
A son was born without father
At his birth even the mother was not home,
Who was he? (tr.)

Another example of the ritualistic riddle is found in the Khandesh part of Maharashtra. The riddle contest is held on the day of an agricultural festival, called Poḷā. On this day oxen are decorated and worshipped as in Māṭṭu Poṅgal in Tamilnadu. The party which loses in the riddle contest has to give materials of worship for the oxen of the winners. (ii) The recreative riddle is very commonly a favourite pastime of children and grown-ups in the villages. It is a playfully constructed enigma about persons, animals and objects. The following translations of two such recreative riddles will illustrate the point. Answers to the riddles are given in brackets.

(a) Without rain, without water, how is the forest green? Without catechu, without lime, how is the red mouth seen? (betel-leaf)
(b) Its face is black but it is not a cat, has two tongues but is not a snake, has five husbands but is not Draupati. What is it? (pen).

Some recreative riddles do away with rhyme and alliteration, they are just plain puzzling statements, while some recreative riddles are poetic in form. Witness, for instance, the following poetic riddle. It is in the form of a conversation between Siva and Parvati.

Whom was I loosening?
Whom was I tying?
Whom did I hold by the hand
And move over my head?
O Sankar, make sense of the utterance!

You were loosening the hair
You were tying it in a plait,
You were holding a comb in the hand
And moving it over the head.
O Parvati, what else is the meaning of your utterance? (tr.

Some riddles do not contain any question, though the other features are all retained. Such questionless riddles are of three types: (1) name riddles, (2) marriage riddles (3) game riddles.

Name Riddles: Name riddles are a product of the ancient superstition which puts a taboo on the uttering of certain names. The utterance of a name is supposed to shorten the life of that name-bearer. The custom applies particularly to married couples who do not call each other by name. On certain occasions, however, this taboo is ceremoniously violated. Name-utterance then becomes a part of the ritual. The practice of uttering the name of the husband or wife in the form of a questionless riddle exists in Maharashtra and also in certain parts of Karnataka where it is found among high-caste Brahmins who are culturally related to Maharashtra. Such a riddle is known as *Ukhāṇā* or more popularly as 'uttering the name'. The name riddle provides a rather decorative syntactic framework within which the name of the marriage partner occurs.

Marriage Riddles. More universal, however, is the use of riddles in marriages. These marriage riddles use a great deal of obscene language, sexual symbolism and abusive terms.

Game Riddles. In Maharashtra game riddles occur as part of games like the *Phugaḍi* played by girls and by grown up women. The *Phugaḍi* is a form of circular dance in which two girls, with their hands interlocked, move round and

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round with increasing speed; while at the same time, they hold a riddle-contest which involves an exchange of sharp retorts and taunts. Sometimes, these riddles do away with retorts and express the bond of friendship between the girls. A riddle like the following is very common:

We two as friends are well paired off
We wear gold bracelets of the same size and pattern.
(tr.)

Proverbs

The proverb is a compact vivid statement. Unlike the riddle, it achieves its impact by a direct, forceful communication of its meaning. Drawing upon the resources of folk life and experience, it aims at moral instruction. Hence, very often, a proverb finds its counterpart, with some changes, in other folk literatures also. Thus the Marathi proverb 'Uthaḷ Pāṇyālā Rhaḷkhaḷāt phār' (Shallow waters make much noise) finds its variants in other folk items. Similarly, another Marathi proverb meaning 'What does an ass know of the taste of jaggery?' has its variants in other Indian languages and these are determined by regional factors. Jaggery is a major agricultural produce in Maharashtra, used in cooking in a variety of ways. In Assamese, Oriya, Tamil and Malayalam, the proverb has coconut instead of jaggery, since coconut is a major agricultural product in these regions. Another Marathi proverb 'What does a barren woman know of labour pains?' finds its variants in Hindi, Urdu, Sindhi, Assamese, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada—thereby testifying to the universality of proverbs rooted in common folk experience.

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Oriya

K. B. DAS

Introduction

Modern Orissa constitutes an area of more than sixty thousand square miles and has a population of more than twenty-two million. Almost a quarter of this population consists of sixty-two tribal groups such as the Santal, Bhuyan, Koya, Paraja, Gadba, Kondh, Juang, Kol, Saura, Gond, Bonda, etc. Some of them are so backward that they still live in a primitive state. They live on forest fruits and roots and hunting is their chief pastime. These tribal communities are at various stages of acculturation. Most of them do not have a written script. Their literature is thus largely oral and is continued through a tradition of singing. With the socio-economic changes resulting from modernization the songs and tales of this tradition underwent changes and distortion.

John Beames, Collector of the District of Balasore in 1868, was the pioneer in the collection of such folklore. Gopal Chandra Praharaj, Chakradhar Mahapatra and Kunjabehari Das followed him. Later Verrier Elwin, Lakshminarayan Sahu, Gopinath Mohanty and Sitakant Mahapatra continued the collection of folk literature of the tribal people. Gopinath Mohanty, the Jnanpith award winner, collected the songs of the Kondhs and the Parajas while Sitakant Mahapatra edited in translation five volumes of the oral poetry of the Mundas, the Oraons, the Santals, the Kondhs and the Parajas. Still a major portion of the folk literature lies scattered and is gradually facing extinc-

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tion under the impact of modernization. 'Orissa's hills and dales tell stories, its trees and creepers sing and its people dance to the music of the spheres' (tr. from *Prācina Utkal* by Jagabandhu Singh). These remarks emphasize the living and vital folk tradition and literature of Orissa.

Lord Jagannath is the meeting point of many Indian religions and cultures. Great saints and thinkers such as Sankara, Ramananda and Chaitanya came and lived at Puri and contributed to the evolution of Jagannath dharma. The images of deities made of wood and the rituals accompanying their worship reflect the possible tribal origin of this great religion. Tree worship was prevalent in many ancient cultures. Various philosophies of Hinduism and Buddhism have merged to make Jagannath dharma a highly synthetic and eclectic religion. It is also one of the main sources of Indian folk culture. The Aryanization of the Lord from His aboriginal origin of the Nilamadhaba could be an interesting study. Mythology and folklore, philosophy and theology, meet in this most cosmopolitan of all gods and religions. He is a symbol of religious tolerance and universal brotherhood and a source of hundreds of folk-ballads and songs composed over centuries both by anonymous as well as famous poets and composers. Jagannath is the veritable fountainhead of the folk-religion and folk-culture of Orissa. The *jananas* (a prayer-song for redemption from suffering), the *bhajanas*, the *stutis* (prayer of praise) and various other prayer-songs composed in His honour by anonymous composers remain the favourite of millions in Orissa. It is a unique combination of vedic religion and literature with folk forms of beliefs, ideas and literature.

Folk literature may be broadly divided into four classes, viz. (i) the folk-song, (ii) the folk-tale, (iii) the proverb, and (iv) the folk-play.

Folk-song (Loka Gīta)

The folk-song is not considered a creation or monument of any particular individual. It is accepted as the creation of many poets, a symbol of the masses. But individual feelings and emotions vibrate and individual smiles and tears sparkle in them. They derive their motifs and inspiration from group consciousness. The song-makers are indeed a galaxy of poets from all walks of life—thousands of ploughmen, cartmen, boatmen, day-labourers, *pālki* (palanquin made of wood) bearers, grass-cutters, herdsmen, hewers of wood and drawers of water and young ladies who sit on the swing and sing with tears in their eyes when they leave their paternal houses for those of the mothers-in-law.

The peculiarity of the folk-song lies in the fact that it is inherited and perpetuated by oral tradition and the singer knows nothing about the composer or how the song changes its course or how it branches out into different tunes and melodies. The singer may sing alone or in a group, with or without the accompaniment of musical instruments.

The text of the song and its melody do not form an integral part and sometimes the bond may be broken. The same song may be sung in different tunes in different parts of the country, regions or even in the same locality. This is corroborated by the fact that the singer forgets the basic melody and sets the song to his favourite notes. Under these circumstances, it becomes difficult to find out the basic melodies. A few melodies in comparison to the very large number of songs testify to this fact.

The rural folk rarely modulate their voices and the music is rendered in a voice without harmonic setting. In Orissa both the types of folk music—vocal and instrumental—are prevalent. Work-songs, game-songs, swing-songs, boatman's songs (*Nāuria gīta*), cartman's songs (*Sagadia gīta*), teasing songs, songs of fasts and festivals are mostly vocal and instrumental accompaniment is rare.

Beggars who sing most ballads, i.e. stories of ancient times with folk motifs, sometimes come in twos. One sings a line and his companion repeats the same. He may play on flute, lyre or any other musical instrument such as *kendara* in tune with the song. The snake-charmer plays on the *nāgeswar* (a type of Shahnai) and sings *Padmatolā*, a song dealing with the Puranic tale of Krishna plucking the golden lotus from the lake Kalindi. The cobra dances to the tune of the song. In Homo, Dālkhāi, Rasarkeli, Gurā Kutā, Bankijhulki of Sambalpur and Chaitraparba of Koraput, songs accompany dance. There is usually a coordination in the rhythm of music and dance in these folk performances.

Ballads (Loka Gāthā). The oral ballads may be broadly divided into three classes depending on their theme: (a) religious, (b) tragic and (c) comic.

Baulā, the truthful cow retaining its promise, Govinda Chandra, the King of Bengal becoming a monk, Karna sacrificing his dear son to feed the honoured guest, belong to the first category. Loss of a son, suicide, the banishment of Dibyasingha Deb, the King of Puri for the offence of murder, a chaste wife jumping into the husband's pyre belong to the second; and marriage songs to the third category.

Some ballads are tragi-comic in nature. In one, for example, the daughter-in-law makes allegations against her oppressive mother-in-law as in the following lines:

She calls me a vile viper
She mixes water or salt in my cooked curry,
If I sit, she calls me a round piece of stone
If I speak, she says, the daughter-in-law is very harsh in tone.

If I fall asleep in sorrow,

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She says, 'Look there a husking paddle'.
If I shed tears to relieve my heavy heart,
She asks—which relation of yours is dead? (tr.)

Songs Accompanying Work. A cultivator's life is one of hard toil and harsh realities. His songs are brief in line scheme—three or four lines each, all composed in one or two metres. The last line, the longest, can be extended to the length of a full breath. The farmers as they plough the field, take out weeds or reap the harvest, sing songs in joy. As the harvested crop is carried home, there is equal sense of joy and songs come to the lips easily. The cartmen, as they take their bullock-carts through varying terrains, sing hearty songs.

The song of tatooing (*chitākutā gīta*) was once very popular. The artist, generally a lady of lower class, moved from door to door and painted the bodies of young women with beautiful floral designs, the name of the husband, of Radha-Krishna, etc. She painted blossoms of mango trees, garlands of flowers on the breast, five-flower arrows of the love-god cupid or Kamadeva on the forehead and charmed her clients in the course of this painful process with various songs. A sample of this is given below:

O diamond among ladies,
Your body will be decorated with flowery bowers,
Flying birds, shining moon and stars.
Go and bow down to your husband
He should first appreciate it
Thereafter you may pay. (tr.)

Nursery Songs (Nānābāyā Gīta). Nursery songs are mostly incoherent and meaningless. Each of the lines draws a picture, vague and incomplete, yet delightful. It breathes an atmosphere of innocence and happy sentiments. It is irregular in metre and not always fine in diction.

Those songs were utilized to put children to sleep, to teach them to walk, to dance, to drink milk, to eat food, to play, to count, to be industrious and good-natured. The child received the necessary education for socialization through them. A sample of nursery rhymes used to put children to sleep is given below:

Dho re baya dho
Dho re baya dho
Jeun Kiarire', gahala mandia
Sei kiarire so.

Sleep my baby sleep
Sleep my baby sleep
In ragi fields dense and deep
Sleep my baby sleep. (tr.)

A riddle (*Praheḷikā*) is used by grown up children to test the listener's ingenuity. It has normally two meanings. The external meaning is descriptive and clear though unnecessary. It is the inner meaning that really matters. Strong common sense succeeds where deep learning fails miserably. Three examples are given below:

A boy fell down from the sky. He had a turban on head. (palm-fruit).
A strange fruit-soft when unripe, hard when ripe. (earthen pot).
A little bit of cloth, but it never dries. (the tongue). (tr.)

Pastoral Songs. The cowherd and shepherd boys move in fields, forests and dales with their flocks and fill the vacant hours with songs which refer to their hard life as they sit and relax under the palm-leaf umbrellas.

Folk-tale (Kahāni or Āimā Kahāni)

We have two types of tellers: (a) those in the royal courts or the courts of Zamindars and ex-feudal lords; and (b) the simple men and women. The former type adorned the king's court and based their stories on traditional Sanskrit ones like *Daśakumār Carita* and *Pañcatantra*, etc. for their Oriya version. The latter have a distinct way of starting the story in the calm and quiet atmosphere of the village and generally in the evenings. The grandmother with a gathering of children around her would begin the story invariably with the following meaningless lines:

Let me tell you a story
What story?
Of a frog.
What frog?
Wooden frog.
What wood?
An oil man's wood
What oil man?
He moves the pressing machine.
What pressing machine?
Of sugarcane.
What sugarcane?
Kantari type of sugarcane.
What kantari?
An old woman who knows charms.
What old woman?
Who dances with a basket of beaten rice.

She would end the story with the following lines:

My story ends here
The flower plant dies
Well flower plant, why did you die?
The black cow ate me up.
Well black cow, why did you eat it up?

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The herdsman did not watch me.
Well herdsman, why did not you watch the cow?
The eldest daughter-in-law did not give me food.
Well daughter-in-law, why did not you give food?
My child wept.
Well child, why did you weep?
I was bitten by a dusty-black ant.
Well black ant, why did you bite the child?
I live in the hole,
I bite whenever I find a bit of soft flesh. (tr.)

Folk-tales may be divided into several classes such as (a) fables, (b) tales of gods, giants, ghosts and witches, (c) tales of birds, beasts, reptiles and fishes, (d) tales of adventure, (e) tales involving intricate questions and answers, (f) tales of humour and satire, (g) tales of sea voyage.

Folk-tales may also be classified according to motifs. Motifs of the folk-tales of the world are mostly similar. Gods, angels, ghosts, the heartless stepmother, frightening giants, birds, beasts and reptiles which talk like human beings may all be taken as motifs. A short motif-index prepared in Oriya in the line of Stith Thomson's work on the life index motifs of folk-tales of the world may be as follows: (a) mythological motifs, (b) animals, (c) taboo, (d) magic, (e) the dead, (f) various tests prescribed to ascertain loyalty, love and devotion, (g) the wise and the foolish, (h) deception, (i) chance and fate, (j) society, (k) rewards and punishments, (l) humour (m) miscellaneous items such as cumulative tales, enigmatic language, skin-dress and unnatural cruelty.

The king, as depicted in the folk-tale, seems to be the ruler of a small kingdom. He is autocratic, foolish and whimsical. Any crime against him is punishable with death. If he desired to punish the faithless queen, he ordered digging a deep pit, invited the queen with an artificial smile to guess the amount of paddy that the pit would contain. When she would stand by the pit, guessing, she was pushed down. Then thorn-bushes and baskets of soil were thrown in to put an end to her life.

Ties of friendship among the prince, the minister's son, the merchant's son and the police officer's son were strong. One would sacrifice wealth, happiness and life for one's friend. The gardener's wife played an important part in the drama of life. She acted as a faithful intermediary between lovers. The prince of a far-off land takes shelter in her house, conceals love-letters in the garlands wreathed by her for the princess. She turns the prince into a ram by charms during the day, and into a man again at night to satiate her emotions.

The giantess uses her legs as logs of firewood in another tale. When the prey escaped on a speeding horse, she at once tied a leaking packet of mustard to the hairy tail of the animal. The mustard was strewn all along the way. Mustard plants sprouted. The sons of the giantess could track their way in the line of mustard plants. When they were on the point of catching the prince, their prey, he uttered some incantations and their path was covered with dense fog. The giants pursued, but were slow. Then the path was covered with thorns which they tore up with their sharp teeth; thereafter, with burning fire, which they put out by spitting profusely on it; next, with flood water, which they swam across. Finding no other way of escape, he entered into the trunk of a tree. When the giants tried to uproot that mango tree of *Satya Yuga* (the Age of Truth) the tree blossomed and there grew up a single mango which ripened at once and fell into a tank which was swallowed by a fish. The prince was rescued when the fish was caught. The giant or giantess possessed a second soul and could not be killed till the second soul was destroyed. The soul was hidden in a tiny wooden box in the form of a black bee under the deep waters of the sea or else it was a black ram kept secretly in a solitary room under the earth. The secret of death was out through the adopted daughter, a stolen princess who was enamoured of a stranger-prince.

A magic boat or magic jewel could work wonders. A flying horse could carry its rider to any place in the twinkling of an eye. Putting on a pair of magic sandals one could fly hundreds of miles within a moment. A magic cane could give birth to an army of soldiers. A magic bag could produce delicious food for thousands of people. A flying tree could be used as a conveyance to carry a man to any destination.

Proverb (Pravacana)

A proverb is the distilled essence of some experience. It depicts in a flash an aspect of human character. Experience of the composer and the characters portrayed may be varied and of different categories. But it does not express individual peculiarities; it represents classes with special characteristics of their own. We see the king, the moneyed man, the squanderer, the miser, the mischievous, the vainglorious, the idiot—all as classes which make up a society. The conventions relating to them appear to be fixed and unchangeable. The moral code which was not the absolute one of right but the relative one of social practice binding on those people who once lived and moved in the surroundings.

We notice a procession of hundreds of humans in the proverbs—the king being whimsical and foolish, the money lender miserly and hateful, the mother-in-law wilful and arrogant, the daughter-in-law sad but revengeful, the neighbour unsociable and quarrelsome. They appear in all their complexity and freshness of colour. Lively on the lips of the traditional reciters, they land us in a world of every day experience of the common man.

In proverbs we discover the true emergence of the secular man. Here a man is criticized for his idleness, pri

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effeminacy or greed. The king is criticized for his caprice, the minister for his misjudgement, the merchant for exploitation, the quack for maltreatment of the patient. Translations of a few Oriya proverbs are given below:

(i) Unable to oil his own machine,
He gives counsels to others!
(ii) He puts on borrowed clothes and goes to the fair
Ask him the price
He shamelessly nods his head!
(iii) Unable to fight with a soldier,
He boasts of valour before his wife!

Folk-play

Excepting Opera or *Jātrā*, folk-play is generally full of songs and dances. There is not much dialogue, no narration of story or portrayal of characters, no dramatic suspense or climax. A short account of a few Oriya folk-plays is given below.

(a) **Pālā.** *Pālā* recital is done by three to five persons. The drummer plays on the *Mṛdaṅga* (a kind of drum). Others play on cymbals, and help the chief singer to sing and explain the meaning of the song to the audience. Satyapira, a deity worshipped both by Hindus and Muslims, is the presiding deity in a *Pālā* performance.

Pālā songs are long, crude and complicated. Sometimes they carry two or three meanings and are full of jugglery of words and alliterations. The chief reciter, in the course of his singing, brings in passages from various Oriya poems.

(b) **Pātuā Jātrā.** *Pātuā* is just like *Pālā* in performance and has several varieties. *Ghaṭāpātuā*, (Ghaṭa=pitcher—symbol of the goddess worshipped), for example, carries a decorated pitcher on his head, sings and dances. Villagers pay him in cash and kind for worship of Siva and Parvati. *Khandāpātuā* stands barefooted on the sharp edge of the sword and is carried on the shoulders in a temple-like wooden structure cheered by the crowd. *Phodāpātuā* drives a big needle into his tongue, and a big nail on the back without any mark of pain on the face. *Niānpātuā* washes his feet with milk and water and walks barefoot on burning charcoal spread on a pit.

(c) **The Chhau.** The *Chhau* dance of Mayurbhanj is another form of folk-dance in which tribal and classical elements have merged. The Mayurbhanj *Chhau* dancer does not use a mask like the Sareikala version. The *Chhau* repertoire contain themes mostly from Puranas. It is partly a pantomime and partly a vigorous rhythmic dance combining the lyrical grace and gay abandon of the folk form of dancing and the discipline and sophistication of a classical dance.

(d) **Dandanāta.** To sweep the floor with cowdung water at the sight of a Danda party, signifies invitation for the performance. The householder who invites it is either poor childless or is suffering from some incurable disease. Performers bear all troubles to draw the kind attention of Siva, the presiding deity of Danda, towards the afflicted. They roll on the hot sand in midday sun of summer or on thorns without any sign of suffering on their faces. This form of dance is prevalent mostly in Southern Orissa.

(e) **Karmānāta.** *Karmā*, a famous autumnal festival, starts from the 11th day of bright fortnight of Bhadrab. Karma, its presiding deity, is the god of fate who controls human destiny, grants wealth to the poor and children to the childless. He was originally a tribal god and was later Aryanized. The party of dancers are both Aryan and Tribals.

(f) **Chaitighodānāta.** It is the most prominent festival of the fishermen and is held in the month of Chaitra. A goddess named Basuli possessing the head of a horse is worshipped. A well-decorated wooden head is attached to the trunk of a horse built of bamboos. A man enters through the hole kept for the purpose behind the neck. He looks like a rider from a distance. Besides the drummer and the piper, the performing party consists of two members—a male and a female (a male in female attire). They sing and dance before the goddess Basuli.

(g) **Dāskāthia.** *Dāskāthia* is a small performing party of two members. One is the singer, the other is his helper. *Dāsa* means a devotee, literally a slave. *Kāthia* means two pieces of wood played on in tune with the song. The two persons sometimes stage a whole drama like *Candrabati*, *Kansabadha* (killing of the Puranic demon Kansa) or *Sītāharaṇā*. They introduce humorous stories to break the monotony of continuous singing.

Moghul Tāmsā. *Tāmsā* is a play-like Opera, confined to Bhadrak in the district of Balasore. The performance is held in the temple compound of Siva. The performers criticize the Moghul rulers in the days of their decadence in a sarcastic vein.

One of the most poignant scenes in Oriya social life is the departure of a young bride after her marriage from the parent's house. It is almost like a tender plant being uprooted to be transplanted elsewhere. In earlier days when arranged marriages were very common, it quite often happened that a young bride was given away in marriage to an old man. Given below is the lament of a young bride on being married to an old man:

Father sat in the inner room, O mother,
The money came in the afternoon, O mother...
As life flows through me so real, O mother,
All the money will be turned to coal, O mother...

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Beneath the husker, the husk is clean, O mother,
Upon the altar sits the bald old man, O mother...
As he walked with flowers, crowned, O mother,
He stumbled and fell, his knees on the ground,
O mother...

My father sits on the bedecked altar, O mother,
And magic words he blows in his ear, O mother...
Mouth so toothless, gums all bared, O mother,
On the altar he just sat and stared, O mother...
The *bel* ripens on the mountain-top, O mother,
You have no shame,
You've placed a flower on an old man's head,
O mother,...

Not a bit of shame that old man has, O mother,
He sits there on the altar
To be wedded, O my mother,
See the bullocks he has tied beside, O mother...
(tr. Jyotsna Mahapatra)

Besides the different aspects of folk culture discussed above, mention may, perhaps, be made of the folk culture of the significant percentage of tribals in Orissa. The state has a tribal population of a little above one-fourth of its total population and as mentioned earlier there are as many as 62 groups among the tribals. Many of them like the Santals and the Mundas have a rich literature of their own. In the past few years attempts have been made by different scholars to document their oral poetry and tales. In this connection, mention may be made of the collection of Kondh and Paraja poetry by Gopinath Mohanty and the collection of Munda, Oraon and Santal poetry by Sitakant Mahapatra.

Folk idiom has influenced contemporary writing in Oriya. Modern novelists and short-story writers also make use of the folk idiom to popularize their own writings.

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Punjabi

BALBIR SING SANDHU

The Background

Folk literature originates from what the common man stores in his memory; and, in the process of transmission from the present to the future it undergoes additions and transformations. The term 'folk' in this paper is defined as any group of people who share at least one common factor. It does not matter what the linking factor is—it could be a common occupation, a language or a religion. A member of the group may not know all the members, but he will probably know the common core of traditions belonging to the group. 'These traditions help the group to have a sense of group identity. This group could be as large as a nation or as small as a family' (Dundes, 1978, p. 7). In this paper the group of people comprises all the people of Punjab, speaking various dialects but sharing a common cultural heritage. They live mostly in villages. Folk literature, it may be emphasized here, serves as the model for the written literature. Written literature is in standard language and is of known authorship, whereas folk literature,

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various spoken dialects pulsates in the minds of the people as blood courses in their veins. The works are of anonymous authorship and of uncertain dates. Often they are considered crude, lacking in refinement and sophistication.

We do not have an up-to-date survey material at our disposal relating to the various dialects of Punjabi spoken in this or the other side of the border. We shall only be dealing with *Majhi*, *Malwai*, *Puadi* dialects and folk literature composed in them. But the main material utilized here is taken from Malwa and Majha, as these areas have always been the pace-setters in Punjabi social, religious and political life.

Important Collections

Until now a scientific study of Punjabi folk literature has not been undertaken by any of the institutions working in either the Pakistani or the Indian Punjab. Some European scholars such as Abbot (1854), Temple (1880–1903) and Youngson (1906, 1907), initiated work in this field mostly in the second half of the 19th century (dates indicated in brackets). Afterwards, some Punjabi scholars also took up the thread and expanded their work. They mostly collected and edited songs, ballads, tales and other materials constituting folk literature in Punjabi. Scholars such as Kohli (1944), Harjit Singh (1949), Dhir (1954), Sher (1954), Samsher (1959), Daler (1964, 1967), Suba Singh (1967), Amrita Pritam (1970), Ahmed Saleem (1973), Padam (1974), Satyarthi (1936, 1944), etc. have contributed a lot in the collection and editing of the folk literature (date of publications shown in brackets) in Punjabi. The department of Punjabi Studies at Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, took the first big step towards a scientific study of the folk literature of Punjab. Some other universities in this region, too, took up work in this field. However, in all these undertakings, the general guidance and influence of Randhawa is patent.

The first serious work (1973) in this field was undertaken by K. S. Thind. Later, another young scholar, Nahar Singh, made important contributions (1980) to the study of folk literature of Malwa in particular. Apart from the above, a substantial and basic contribution, in this field is the publication of *Pañjābi Lokdhara Viśva Koś* (Encyclopaedia of Folk Literature of Punjabi) in four volumes by S. S. Vanjara Bedi. This work goes a long way in advancing the study of the folk literature of Punjab.

The folk literature of Punjab, if examined in depth, can be analysed into, at least, four layers or levels: (i) the Vedic, (ii) the Buddhist, (iii) the Arabo-Persian Islamic and (iv) Transformed Sikh-Bhagati. To a layman folk literature appears very simple, but if studied in depth, it is not so.

Before discussing folk literature, it is essential to examine the social system under which the folks of Punjab have been living. The need of the society is to create harmony, interdependence and mutual cooperation among the people. Thus, social relations serve as a mould for the life of the people.

Religion in Punjab played a peripheral role in the life of the people. It is based on the old Vedic foundations, but an important exception is that the 'Jāṭ' peasantry occupied the central position in the hierarchy and not the priestly class. Even in a village, Hindu and Muslim ways of life have been mixed in such a way that it becomes difficult to separate one from the other. That is why the Punjabis were ready for the Sikh way of life which was totally opposed to the orthodoxy and fundamentalism of both Hinduism and Islam. This fact can very well be proved by the scriptures of the *Gurus* and the *Bhattas* belonging to various castes and creeds, included in the *Adi Granth*, a religious book of the Sikhs. Consequently, in Punjab the backward or scheduled castes are not so depressed or deprived sections of the society as in the central part of India. Rather, Sikhism, from the very beginning, has been hostile to a caste-based society. Even a Hindu or a Muslim Punjabi is in no way as orthodox as his counterpart living anywhere else in India. Thus in Punjabi life and culture the four layers overlap each other.

Division of Folk Literature

Generally, Punjabi folk literature can be divided into poetry and prose. In prose, we include tales, *Sākhīs* (stories about the saints), family tales, mythological tales, riddles, proverbs, sayings, etc. The main category of prose is narrative. But Punjabi narrative style, not to speak of the Indian in general, is structurally different from the Western narrative forms.

In poetry, we may include all the folk-songs sung on various socio-religious occasions in Punjabi life, such as birth, marriage and death, love-making, meeting, separation between the lovers, religious festivals and ceremonies, etc.

Folk literature in Punjabi covers every aspect of the Punjabi life. Thematically, we may classify the whole literature in the following manner:

(i) Individual love, separation and tension, conflict between the individual and the society and its various institutional operative rules which limit the freedom of human actions;
(ii) Hard work and monotony;
(iii) Social ceremonial themes;
(iv) Religious and political themes.

In the Punjabi folk life, the domination of the male is accepted. Thus the woman, be she daughter, wife or beloved, has to depend upon her brothers, father, husband or lover for almost everything. If she is not married, she

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has to accept the supremacy of her father or brother. But there are some stories wherein an individual's fortune has been depicted to be uninfluenced by the fortune of his/her near and dear ones. As an illustration of this point of view, we briefly narrate the story of the Seven Daughters of a King:

A king had seven daughters. The king one day asked each of them, 'On whose *bhāgya* (luck) are you dependent?' Six of them replied that their good and happy life was due to their father's *bhāgya*. However, the seventh daughter replied that she was dependent only on her own *bhāgya*. The king married the six daughters to some princes, whereas the seventh was given to a leper who had neither legs nor hands. She took the challenge, put her leprous husband in a basket and carried him away with a smiling face. She visited every sacred place. One day, she left him near a pond in a forest and went to the village to beg food for him. As the husband waited for her return, he saw an amazing sight of black crows being turned white when they took a dip in the pond. He, too, moved towards the pond and fell into it, and as soon as he touched the water, he became a healthy and handsome young man. When she came back, she was taken aback to see a healthy man instead of her leper husband. She inquired of him about her leper husband and he narrated to her the whole story. That was her *bhāgya*.

This story is rather ancient. In the 16th and 17th centuries, such stories have been attached to different holy places in order to enhance their importance. But if we examine carefully the many versions of this story, it becomes evident that the underlying motive is that a devoted wife can perform miracles by sheer devotion to her husband. Even the gods have to bow down before such a devoted wife.

Folk-songs

Domestic Scene. In songs, the daughter always takes pride in her father's and brother's bravery and sincere love for her. She always wants to be married to a person who will not go away. She says in a song:

O my father don't marry me to a soldier
because he never lives at home,
But give my hand in marriage to a tiller,
who would live with me all the time....
But father, you did not pay heed to my supplications.
O father haven't I been telling you time and again,
not to marry me to a soldier!
Now I am all alone. (tr.)

But when she sees some dreams about the victory of her husband, she says to her friends:

The rainy season is on
whereas I am sleeping with my ears in my knees.
While sleeping
I dreamt that my husband had captured the territory o
Attak,
O sisters mine,
Congratulate me.
While spinning, my shoulders tremble,
Congratulate me, O sister, my husband has left Attak fo
home.
While spinning, my spinning wheel makes noise,
I pray to God that my husband may return soon. (tr

The songs, reveal that though the Punjabi woman wan her husband to live with her, she also wants him to be brave soldier winning laurels. This song belongs to th period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh when the Sikhs we fighting for their land against the foreign invaders.

But when he was sent to the war-front for defending th colonial rulers, she again weeps and pleads to the Englis rulers that they should send only bachelors to the fron Such songs of pain and yearning for the beloved are abun dant in the folk literature as most of the Punjabi men ar keen on serving in the army.

Oh! I am milking the cow,
Also weeping.
My husband has gone to war on the front in Basara.

If war of Basara stops,
I would really become married. (tr.)

Songs relating to the life of the newly married girl show ing conflict with her mother-in-law (and father-in-law are abundant in the Punjabi folk literature. This confli is due to the possessive nature of the mother-in-law ov her son whose love is shared by the daughter-in-law. Th mother-in-law is usually depicted as a black characte The daughter-in-law has to fight for her rights and privileg She would curse her mother-in-law because when h brother came to visit her, she did not put sufficient but in his sweet dish. 'May her buffaloes die.' This conflict portrayed in the Punjabi folk literature has many dime sions. On the one hand, the mother-in-law does not wa to surrender her right to control the household affairs the daughter-in-law and on the other, she feels that h son's affection towards her has become lukewarm. T father-in-law also disturbs the young lady's enjoym because whenever he comes, she has to cover her face a token of respect. Moreover, the joint family arrangem creates many inconveniences for the newly-married cou due to the generation gap, and lack of space in the ho adds to the difficulties. In the agro-economic set-up, has to work hard, and naturally enough, she fights freedom. In this struggle she is helped often by her par

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and occasionally by her sister-in-law (husband's sister), as between the two, there is no generation gap, and she also hopes to get more in dowry from her. Thus in Punjabi folk literature very many songs deal with love, yearning, and aspirations of the young married girls. They, generally, conform to the ethical, socio-religious moral code accepted by Punjabi society. Another member in her husband's family with whom she develops a special kind of relationship is his younger brother. Often in such songs this young boy is always loved by her as he always helps her in her daily routine work such as taking out her cattle for grazing, bringing fodder for them from the fields, playing with her children, etc. If her husband is in the army far away, then the brother, who is often unmarried, is a great help to her. He plays many roles in her life; a younger brother, a friend, a son or a companion in need. One song expresses this idea thus:

She is elder and younger is the husband's brother,
Both are embracing each other.
Oh my husband's brother you are
very lovely, please help me.
I would not deny you your right over me. (tr.)

On the other hand, she is depicted as very hostile towards the elder brother of her husband. It may be due to the generation gap as also he is married and his family is a rival to her. There is hardly any touch of romantic sentiments in the relationship mirrored. Thus the folk-songs vividly depict the conflicting relationships in the domestic scene of Punjabi culture.

Social Set-up. Further, it would be interesting to examine the social situations, where tension is expressed between the individual or family on the one hand and some religious, social or political institutions on the other, as depicted in the folk literature. All the social institutions, while providing protection to the individual also demand in return conformity to established patterns of social behaviour. But due to some internal stresses and tensions, a social system creates situations in which some individuals or group of people are alienated from the society. This tension is expressed in Punjabi folk-songs dealing with bachelors when there was a shortage of women in Punjabi society. Married women are shown cursing the bachelors and they say:

O! Englishman, if you want to win the war,
Send these bachelors to the front. (tr.)

They are shunned by all married women. The conduct of these bachelors has been satirized and lampooned in folk literature, as one without moral and ethical scruples.

The mother of the bachelor died,
No women dared to go to his house for mourning. (tr.)

When institutions are strong and they limit the freedom of the individual, the people comment against them to give expression to their anger. In Punjabi folk-songs, and in the Sufi and Sikh Gurus' poetry, the fundamentalism of religions has been ridiculed. Bullhe Shah (1680–1758) says:

In the religious places live the bandits,
In the *Ṭhākar dvarās* live the *Ṭhagas*,
In the Mosques, live the heretic.
The true lovers of God live away from these places. (tr.)

Mostly, this type of condemnation is directed towards ritualism of the priestly class and selfishness of administrators and bureaucrats.

O youngsters, look at the chiselled form
Of the wife of Brahman
Carry her away while repeating the name of God.

The wife of the Paṭwāri
has been carried away by the thugs. (tr.)

It shows the anger of the folk towards those who belong to the religious or socio-political classes. The themes of a large number of songs are developed around persons like the Thanedar, the Tahsildar, the Collector, etc. These functionaries of the state are the visible symbols of authority and hence have always been associated with the use of power. The songs express the innermost feelings of ordinary folks about them. In most of the ballads the folk heroes have been shown fighting against the arbitrary behaviour of the dignitaries of the government.

Occupational Songs. Another type of songs and stories in the Punjabi folk literature deals with the theme of the hard life of the farmer. There are many tales on this subject. Most of the songs provide an escape from the monotony of work, and are also an expression of the deeper yearning of the human heart for colourful and enjoyable life. Sitting at the 'gāhdi' (seat) of the Persian wheel, or crushing the sugarcane with the help of bullock in olden days, was a very monotonous work, indeed. To break such a wearisome task the farmer sings songs about his handsome pair of bullocks and next sings about the beauty and kind-heartedness of his wife. These songs tell us that the focus of the life of the Punjabi farmer has always been his family and the bullocks on whom he depended for his daily bread.

Ceremonial Songs. In the ceremonial songs, we may take the songs which are sung at the time of the birth of a male child, engagement, marriage and on some festivals such

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as *Tīja* and *Karvā Chauth*. Apart from these, there are some dirge-like songs which give expression to lamentations and sorrow on the demise of a near and dear one. The people of Punjab are very passionate, sentimental, full of vigour and vitality. They crave to celebrate every event of their life with their near and dear ones. The birth of a male child is considered to be a good occasion for such celebrations and feasting. The feast arranged to celebrate this event is called 'Chaṭṭi'. The aunt of the new-born sings:

Oh! a son has been born to my brother,
It is just like the rising of the moon
at the house of my brother. (tr.)

Songs which are sung on this occasion wishing the new-born long life and prosperity are called *lori*:

Oh gardener it is all green,
Green it is, very good and pleasant,
That day is the best day,
On which this green son was born. (tr.)

It is the sisters who feel the greatest joy on this occasion. They expect from him protection and affection when he will grow up. His status in society when he becomes a major, would make them feel proud of him and also enhance their position in society. Therefore, they sing songs embodying their aspirations about this new brother. His position in the society gives the sister respectability:

Look! my brother's stick when struck,
Thunders like the cloud. (tr.)

She is also ready to sacrifice her life for him:

Oh mother-in-law,
You may take my life.
But don't curse my brother. (tr.)

She is happy when he visits her after her marriage. She also expects from him attractive gifts:

Oh my landlord brother,
Don't you see that my hand is without a ring. (tr.)

But when she looks at the camel of her brother, she is in ecstasy:

After seeing the camel of her brother,
She began to walk like a wrestler. (tr.)

Brother-sister relation is considered to be a unique one in Punjabi life which has its roots in the tradition of Northern Indian culture.

Oh brother, may you live long.
You are just like a god to me. (tr.)

When a daughter or a son grows up, some tension is created due to their unregulated behaviour and craze to get married. But the marriage can only be recognized as a regular one if all the social, moral and ethical obligations and ceremonies are fulfilled. A young son is more difficult to control and becomes a problem for his parents:

Ari Ari Ari! (meaningless repetition)
At the village of Jagrawan,
the festival of light is held.
Young men from far and wide,
come to visit the place.
On well-decorated horses and camels,
they wear attractive loin cloths and twirl their moustaches,
While laughing they may fight.
When they fight the swords and axes are exchanged freely.
O! these are the days of their youth,
they may go astray. (tr.)

On the other side, a very conscious fear is entertained by the parents till the girl is married. They find it difficult to keep her virginity intact.

Oh! the hairs of my beard have become white,
because my daughter has come of age. (tr.)

When the daughter is engaged, different kinds of songs are sung to celebrate the occasion:

Daughter : Oh father search out some groom for me.
Father : Oh daughter what type of groom would you like?
Daughter : As amongst the stars—moon,
and amongst the moons—a Kanhīyā
O my father seek out
Such a groom for me. (tr.)

Thus all the mythical heroes and heroines of ancient India serve as models for the young girls and boys.

After the engagement, the marriage is celebrated with gusto and fanfare. The wedding party goes to the bride's house. The remaining members of the family and relatives who stay back at the house of the bridegroom arrange dances in which the maternal relations are more active and enthusiastic. The ethical and moral rules are relaxed a bit so that the dance may become lively. The spectators form themselves in a circle and clap as the dancer dances with rhythmic grace. This clapping is called *giddhā* in Punjabi. When the marriage party goes to be entertained at the house of the bride, songs are sung just to praise or

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tease the bridegroom, his companion or other members of the family. But when the bride is seen off by her parents, very tender and touching songs are sung. The bride says:

Oh! my father,
How difficult it is to leave
This house, the friends and the
Streets of this village where I grew.
Oh my father, be kind and keep me for another day. (tr.)

The father says:

May God bestow upon you happiness.
Oh my dear daughter, please go to your home. (tr.)

On 'Karvā Chauth' festival married women generally fast for the well-being of their husbands. At the time of breaking the fast in the evening they perform 'Argha' ceremony and sing the undernoted song together:

Oh! look here.
The beautiful girl with *mehandi* on her hands,
with sweets she is climbing up the top
of the house for praying to the moon,
for the long life and welfare of her husband. (tr.)

This is recited seven times.

Festivals. The main religious festivals which are celebrated by the folk of Punjab are Diwālī, Dussehrā, Śivrātrī, Guggā Naumī, Īd, and birthdays of the various Sikh Gurus.

At the time of Id, Nāhata (songs) are sung with great adoration and passion for Mohammad. These songs show the influence of Arabo-Persian style of poetry. On Dussehra and Diwali, some typical songs are sung about the adventures of Rama and his fighting with Ravana. But on the eve of the 'Janmā Aṣṭami', very many songs describing the childhood of Krishna, his love for his mother and friends, his mischievous pranks with the Gopis, and his love towards Radha, are sung. But all these songs have their roots in the songs of 'Sūr Sāgar'.

In the villages of Punjab, the peasantry love to celebrate the birthdays of the Sikh Gurus. Especially renowned are the birthdays of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. A day before the birthday, people in a village go in a procession and sing some *shabads* from the scriptures but while singing the same they also add something of their own:

Oh people, our Guru has made a ship,
Come whosoever wants to go across this vast sea of life.
It is the name of *Vaheguru*—the name of Almighty.
While reciting it with devotion,
One can cross it with safety. (tr.)

Folk-drama

The folk-drama of Punjab can be divided into two categories: (i) *Ras* and *Naql*, and (ii) Skit-like performances staged by womenfolk during festivities.

In the first category are included the dramatic performances which are usually staged by some professional parties such as 'Rasdhārias' and *Naql* during some religious or social celebrations. *Resdhāri* parties used to stage some episodes from Krishan Lila, Mahabharata, Ramayana or lives of great *Yogis* and *Sattis* such as 'Pūran Bhagat', 'Raja Rasālu' or from some love stories such as 'Hir Rānjhā',' Laila Majnu', 'Sāssi Punnu', etc. The *naqls* are performed mostly during marriage celebrations when some anecdotes and skits provide entertainment and pungent criticism of individual and social life. As regards the dramatic performances of the womenfolk during their *gidhas*, these are merely skits relating to the uncomplimentary behaviour of the mother-in-law and the father-in-law.

In Punjab due to the impact of Islamic puritanism, dramatic activities could not flourish for a long time. However, such activities received a fillip with the introduction of the Western system of education.

Riddles and Proverbs

In Punjabi folk literature riddles occupy an important place. It not only provides entertainment to the people but also tests the knowledge and the common sense of the listener in decodifying the coded reality with the help of his presence of mind and experience gathered from his daily observations. The riddle structure is such that 'Reality' is transformed and codified into another object and presented to listeners for decodification. It is also enjoyed at two levels: (i) level of codification as it is more suggestive and challenging and (ii) the level of decodification as it provides a challenge to the mind.

The riddles in Punjabi folk literature can be classified into two groups: (i) simple riddles, and (ii) complex riddles.

In simple riddles, the codification of reality is direct or self-evident and there is no need of providing extra clues to decodify it, e.g.

(i) Vēkhō yāro ran dī aṛī
gutt puṭākē cauke carī

Look (O' friends) at the woman's obstinacy, (After having been dragged by hair, she entered the kitchen). (tr.)
(*Answer*: carrot).

(ii) Ikk jaṭṭ māe khāndā vēkhiā
Sakkar nāl spōlīē!

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See one farmer eating
Sugar with snakes. (tr.)
(Answer: vermicelli).

In complex riddles the primary object is to test the common sense of the listener. Thus, while codifying, some common types of possible answers are also ruled out. Here is a rough rendering of a riddle:

He lives at the tree top
but is not a bird;
He has three eyes,
but is not Siva;
He gives milk,
but is not a cow;
He has hair,
but is not a Sadhu;
He is full of water
but is not a pitcher. (tr.)
(*Answer*: coconut).

All possible answers in the riddle are ruled out and the listener has to hit upon the other appropriate answer. The solution of a complex riddle requires a sharp intellect, keen observation of life and the capacity to connect apparently dissimilar objects.

Proverbs. Many of the proverbs in Punjabi have come down from the Vedic age and their prototypes can be found in Sanskrit literature.

Structurally, proverbs in Punjabi, can be classified into the following two categories: (i) those constructed on the basis of oppositional elements; and (ii) those based on two elements but one of them intensifying the other. Under the first category come such proverbs as:

Sauṇa rūṛiān da
Supanē śiś mehla dē

Sleeping on the garbage,
dreaming about palaces. (tr.)

In the other type one element intensifies the other which enhances the communicative impact, e.g.

Ikk sapp duje uḍṇā

A snake, and that too a flying one

Snake in itself is a bad thing, but when it is a 'flying one' it is more dangerous.

The Punjabi folk literature is also rich in sayings. The proverbs and sayings are found in prose as well as in verse. They make both the written and the spoken language more vivid and close to the hearts of the folk.

It may be pointed out here that the base of the Sikh philosophy of life is the ancient Hindu heritage which has been undergoing many transformations due to various developments taking place from time to time. It may be the impact of Islamic thought on the Hindu-Buddhistic philosophical traditions from which the new Sikh world-view originated. As on the one hand Sikhism does not believe in the caste-based society, on the other it has explicit faith in the *Akāl* (timeless), which is not under the yoke of *kāla* (time). Apart from this, the Sikhs believe that the Almighty is greater than all these worldly kings, Rajas or the *Avtārās* (incarnations). So a Sikh believes in God and defies the small *Avtārās* and the kings as they are all in the grip of *kāla*, and consequently are not to be worshipped. Thus a spirit of defiance has always persisted in the Punjabi mind which has been against these Rajas, feudal lords and the *Avtārās*—but a great reverence has always been entertained for the poor, the downtrodden and the saintly. While living in the feudal society, a Sikh has always been nursing and fostering an anti-feudalistic set of values. This fact is exemplified in the *Sākhis*, tales and stories from the folk literature of Punjab.

(All translations are by the author)

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Sanskrit

ROMA CHAUDHURI

It is very difficult to define what folk literature exactly is; for, as the very name implies, it emerges from the root of a nation, its people. As a seed sown deep inside the earth puts forth its sprout, to become a full-grown plant before finally raising its head up proudly as a large tree, spreading its extensive branches all around, with all its *saundarya* or beauty of lovely flowers, with all its *mādhurya* or sweetness of luscious fruits, with all its *aiśvarya* or wealth of green foliage, so grew our own folk culture. From humble beginnings, it has so grown, that on it stands the entire edifice of the national culture in all its glory and sublimity. That is why in every nation, in every language, there shines forth brilliantly a particular folk culture of its own.

Now the question is: what is the special contribution of Sanskrit folk culture to the general culture of India as a whole? Does it, really, have a special message of its own? It has to be admitted that Sanskrit folk literature is rather meagre and minor compared with the rich and extensive folk literatures in the provincial languages. But the greatness and richness of Sanskrit, which is not a provincial language and never has been one, lies in its universality, its vastness and limitlessness. Sanskrit culture has a universal message of its own, *sāmya* and *samanvaya*—'unity in diversity—' which ultimately is a golden message of the Highest Spirituality, of one Spirit, one Brahman, one *Īśvara*, one Atman, grounded in all, manifested in all, unified in all. Sanskrit folk literature has the same fundamental theme, the same universal refrain, the same common core. The few fragments of Sanskrit folk literature presented here will demonstrate this.

Folk-poems (Lokakāvya)

By far, the most popular forms of folk literature are folk-poems. These spring spontaneously from loving grandmothers, aunts, foster-mothers, nurses and maidservants as lullabies to tired children; they burst forth extemporaneously from the innermost hearts of hard-working peasants, busy fishermen, hardy boatmen, expert weavers and sturdy labourers. But in Sanskrit literature, folk-poems of exactly this kind are not available in abundance, for Sanskrit was not a language of the masses. However, right from Vedic literature, there is clear evidence that folk sentiments and desires, in all their sensitivity and sensuousness, representing all the joys and sorrows, dreams and strivings of the common man, are expressed in Sanskrit folk-poems.

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Vedic Period

Numerous examples of such poems are found among the world famous *sūktas* of the Nārī-Ṛṣis, the 27 female seers of the Rigveda (*Ṛgveda*). Although these 27 female seers were able to rise to great heights of scholarship and spirituality, they were neither indifferent to nor scornful of ordinary feminine feelings and desires arising out of Nature herself.

Ghoṣā. In two lengthy *sūktas*, consisting of fourteen verses each (10. 39-40), an elderly princess called Ghoṣā, who is striken with leprosy and is therefore unable to get a husband, laments over her fate and prays to the two Aśvinīs, the Divine Doctors, thus:

> O thou Faithful Pair! You alone symbolise good fortune for that lady who is becoming an elderly spinster in her parental house. You two alone help those who are suffering from the pangs of hunger. You two alone protect the lowly, the blind, and the feeble. You two are designated as the physicians of a sacrifice.
>
> I invoke you, O Aśvinīs! Listen to my prayer. Just as parents give wealth to their sons, so, you, too, give me wealth. I am a helpless orphan woman, without any relatives and friends. Free me from this curse of leprosy immediately. (10.39. 3, 6). (tr.)

Apālā. In exactly the same strain, Apālā, the daughter of Atri, prays thus to Indra to cure the skin disease which affects her and which has made her an object of derision to her husband:

> May Indra make us capable in many ways; make us benefited; make us wealthy. We have become objects of derision to our husbands on account of our skin disease, and had to leave them for that reason—may be united with Indra (8. 91. 4). (tr.)

Indrāṇī. Indrāṇī and Śacī, though queens of the heavens, and wives of Indra, still could not rise above that very common feminine sentiment, intense hatred for a co-wife. Two *sūktas*, in the separate names of Indrāṇī and Śacī, are telling examples of how a woman is always a woman, with just one, all-pervasive desire: to rule supreme in her husband's life as queen, unrivalled by co-wives. Indrāṇī bursts into angry denunciation:

> I pluck this very strong medicinal plant, through which a bride can kill her co-wife and get a husband.
>
> O thou medicinal plant! With your leaves spread upwards, bestower of good fortune, sent by the gods, powerful! Remove my co-wife; make my husband mine and mine alone.
>
> O thou medicinal plant! Best in the world! May I be the very best amongst the best, may my co-wife be the very worst amongst the worst.
>
> I do not even utter her name (co-wife's). No one finds any pleasure in her at all. May we banish her to a distant place.
>
> O thou medicinal plant! I shall become victorious through your grace; you, too, will become victorious. Becoming victorious in this way, we two shall conquer all co-wives. (10. 145. 1–4). (tr.)

Śacī

> The sun is rising. My adorable Indra himself is rising like the sun. Getting this husband, being victorious, I shall conquer my co-wives.
>
> I am the Flag, I am the Head. Though I am very ferocious, still I induce my husband to speak sweetly to me. My husband has to be guided by me alone, as I have conquered all other co-wives.
>
> My sons are killers of enemies; my daughter is a sovereign queen. I, too, am a conqueror of my co-wives. So, my laudable fame is sure to shine forth to my husband. (10. 159. 1–3). (tr.)

Sūryā. This well-known *sūkta* of the Rigveda (10.85) consists of 47 verses and is the prototype for many later provincial folk lyrics. It relates the most important incident in the life of a woman, viz. wedding. Here, we get a clear picture of a Vedic wedding ceremony. This is how the bride is blessed:

> O Bride! May you prosper in your husband's house with peace and bliss. May you be ever vigilant in this house to be its Lord. May you be united with your husband. May you, after that, become old together and converse with each other happily at home. (tr.)

This is what the bridegroom says:

> I catch hold of your hands by attaining auspiciousness so that you may grow old with me, your husband. Bhaga, Aryama, Savita, Purandhri, all these Gods have given you to me, so that I may become a householder. (tr.)

This is another blessing for the bride:

> May you rule like a sovereign queen over your father-in-law. May you rule like a sovereign queen over your mother-in-law. May you rule like a sovereign queen over your sister-in-law. May you rule like a sovereign queen over your brother-in-law. (tr.)

Saramā. In another very realistic *sūkta* by Saramā (RV

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V. 10. 108), consisting of eleven verses, there is a fine picture of a village wrangle, a prominent theme of many later folk-poems and songs in different provincial languages. Here is the story:

When the Paṇis or soldiers of the demon (Asura) Vala steal the cows of Bṛhaspati, Indra sends Saramā to search for them. She heroically crosses several big rivers and at last, finds the cows. Then she starts quarrelling with the Paṇis thus:

'O Paṇis! I, the messenger of Indra, have come here, desiring to take back the great wealth you have now acquired. As the river knew that I would cross it any way, it came forward by itself to help me, in this respect; and so, I have been able to cross the river Rasa.'

When the Paṇis refuse to return the cows, she threatens them thus:

'I do not think that it is possible for any one to kill Indra. On the contrary, Indra, as whose messenger I have come here from afar, can kill all. Not even deep rivers can cover him up. So, O Paṇis! You will be put to eternal sleep by Indra.'

Finding the Paṇis still adamant, Saramā boldly proceeds to threaten them anew:

'O, Paṇis! Your words are by no means frightening as those of the soldiers. Let your feeble, sinful bodies be not sharp like arrows.'

Finding the Paṇis still unrelenting, Saramā, as a last resort, seeks for mediation in the dispute:

'Navagva and Aṅgiras, Ṛṣis led by Ayāsa, are coming here now. They will divide the cows among themselves. So, O, Paṇis, withdraw your former words of refusal.'

At long last, convinced and afraid, the Paṇis try to placate Saramā by calling her their sister; but she remains unrelenting:

'I know nothing about the brotherhood. I know nothing about the sisterhood. Indra and the terrible Aṅgiras know about the same. My masters, wishing to get back their cows, have covered your place. So, O Paṇis! go away leaving the excellent cows here.' (tr.)

Classical Period

Most fortunately, this Vedic Feminine Poetic Tradition was continued in its fullest glory in the later Classical Sanskrit literature. Here, too, some beautiful folk elements are found.

A poetess called Indulekha has this to say about the sunset:

Some say that at the close of the day, the sun enters the ocean; others, that it goes on a visit to another world; others, again, that it comes to be united with fire. But all these views are false—there is no evidence for them. O my dear friend! methinks, the sun lies down, on the other hand, upon a love-lorn damsel's heart in which visibly there is intense heat. (*Subhāṣitāvali*, 1902)

Mārulā records an amorous discourse between two lovers thus:

'Why are you thin?'
'Such is my physique.'
'Why are you filthy with dust?'
'Because of cooking in the house of elders.'
'Do you ever remember me?'
'No, no, no', saying so, the girl began to tremble with an ecstasy of love, and falling on my chest, wept. (*Śārāṅgadharapaddhati*, 3531) (tr.)

We have the following folk poetry by Rasavati Priyamvada:

I worship Govinda, the handsome one of Vraja; the remover of births; holding a lotus; dark; sporting on the banks of the Yamuna, the enemy of demons like Kamsa and others; praised by cow-herdesses, and adored by the lotus eyes of the women of Vraja; with his head adorned with peacock feathers and bent in a graceful triple curve. (*Sūktisāgara*, f. 2a) (tr.)

Śīlā Bhaṭṭārikā records beautifully the warning by a suspicious lady, while sending her messenger-maiden to her lover, thus:

O Messenger-maiden, you are a young woman; he, too, is a fickle young man. The quarters are black with darkness. Your message, too, is full of mystery. The place appointed for meeting is a deserted one. The Spring breezes are again and again turning one's mind in other directions. Go dexterously to arrange a speedy meeting between us. May the Gods protect you. (*Sūktimuktāvali*, p. 145: also in other anthologies) (tr.)

The same poetess records the cross-examination by a suspicious lady of the messenger-maiden on her return:

'Why are you breathing deeply?'
'I have come hurriedly.'
'Why are you pleased?'
'I have been favoured.'
'Why have your locks, too, become loose?'
'Because of falling down at his feet.'
'Why is your face bedewed with perspiration?'
'It has become so because of the sun.'
'Why are you weak?'
'Because of excessive talking.'
'What will you say, O cunning messenger-maiden! about your lips, that have assumed the form of a withered

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lotus?' (*Śārṅgadharapaddhati*, 3507: also in other anthologies). (tr.)

An unchaste woman's confession is described thus by Shila Bhattarika:

He who was my first love (literally, stealer of my virginity) is now my husband, present here. Those very same nights in the month of Chaitra have arrived. The same strong breeze, fragrant with the smell of full-blown Malati flowers, is blowing through the Kadamba tree. I am also the very same self. Still my heart is longing for stolen, amorous sports under the cane-creepers on the bank of the river Reva. (*Śārṅgadharapaddhati* 3768: also in other anthologies)

Vijja's songs of rice-husking damsels:

Splendid are the songs of rice-husking, which are mixed with the jingling of bangles, striking against one another in the sprout-like arms, beautiful on account of graceful movements, shining and moving because of the movement of the pestles; and which are accompanied by deep notes, faltering in breasts, heaving violently from the emission of inarticulate exclamations. (*Sūktimuktāvalī*, p. 231: also in other anthologies) (tr.)

These examples of folk-poems by a few poetesses represent some aspects of folk culture. As women have always been closer to Mother Earth, Nature and the Soil than men, their thoughts, feelings and desires bear the stamp of folk-mindedness to a greater extent. Hence, their poems and sayings may very well be taken to be true pictures of a live folk-life.

Folk-poems are famous for their love-motifs; but opinions differ as to their real meaning: Do they represent sensuous human love or divine spiritual love? On the face of it, these poems appear to represent the grosser, sensuous aspects of love, which mean so much to Man. What strikes us most in these verses is their considerable human interest: full of animation and vigour, these poems are passionate outbursts from the very depths of feminine hearts. And when you have that, you can rest assured that you have got folk-motivation at its purest and best.

Folk-fables (Laukika-kathā-Sāhitya)

Fables, are another important form of folk-literature, occupying a place second only to folk-songs and folk-poems. A few illustrations are given below.

Yami. In the Rigveda itself, quite a few elements of folk-tales are found in their pristine beauty. For example, there is a curious fable woven round a brother-sister conversation between Yama and Yami (10.10, 154). In it, there is a naked, vehement, voluptuous appeal by the sister Yami to her own brother Yama for illicit amorous connection:

'Having come to this solitary, extended island on the sea, I call my best boy-friend Yama to enter into an amorous relation with me. May God give me a child, endowed with all qualities, so that you may be a father soon.'

But when Yama refuses, Yami quotes similar examples:

'O Yama! celebrated Gods, too, desire to have amorous connections with their own daughters, sisters and the like. So, let your mind be united with mine. Just as Prajāpati was the husband of his own daughter, so, you, too, become so, in my case.'

She then appeals:

'May Yama's desire run towards Yami. I shall reveal myself to you like a wife to her husband.'

'Is a brother whose sister is without a husband, fit to be called a brother?'

'Is a sister whose brother is grief-stricken, fit to be called a sister?'

'Assailed by amorous desires, I am lamenting in many ways. Unite your body with mine.'

When Yama still refuses, Yami implores:

'O Yama! you are a very timid person. We do not know anything regarding your mind and heart. Just as a piece of rope embraces a horse, just as a creeper embraces a tree, so another lady embraces you.' (tr.)

The only redeeming feature in this well-known poem is that Yama had the good sense to refuse, in spite of all Yami's vehement pleas.

Urvaśī. Another well-known folk-tale, which has had many recensions in later years, is the one about Purūravas and Urvaśī (Rigveda, 10.95). The popular love story narrates how the Apsara Urvaśī, the celebrated celestial dancer, leaves King Pururavas after accusing him of breaking the promises he made to her before marriage. The grief-stricken king runs to and fro in search of her.

According to the story vividly narrated in the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (2.5.1), Urvaśī married King Pururavas on two conditions: that he will never show her his naked body and that he will look after her two dear sheep well. But the Gandharvas, desiring Urvaśī's return to the Heavens, steal the sheep that are tied to the bedstead of the king and his love. Awakened suddenly by the pitiful cries of the sheep, the unprepared king springs out of his bed, naked, and, in that state, runs after the thieves. In the light of lightning sent by the Gandharvas, Urvaśī sees the king in a naked state and at once leaves him and disappears. Maddened with grief, the king runs to and fro, searching for her frantically. At last, he finds Urvaśī in the form of a duck in a pond. When she refuses to come back in spite of all his

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pleadings, the king expresses his resolve to commit suicide. But still unmoved, Urvaśī tauntingly requests him to refrain from doing so for the sake of a woman, with whom no permanent friendship is possible and whose heart is as hard as that of a hyena.

This tale appears to have captured the imaginaion of quite a few later writers and is found in several different versions, e.g. in *Baudhayana-śrauta-sūtra*, *Bṛhaddevatā*, *Harivaṁśa*, *Viṣṇu-purāṇa*, *Kathāsaritsāgara*, etc. The well-known drama *Vikramorvaśīya* by Kalidasa is also woven round this theme.

Manu-matsya-kathā. Another famous tale in the *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* (1.8.1) is about Manu and the Fish. Manu saves the life of a small fish and rears it. It becomes larger and larger and Manu is compelled to put it back into the sea. When there is a universal deluge at the end of a *kalpa* or age, the grateful fish instructs Manu to board a ship and tie it to its horn. Then, it draws the ship to the top of a hill, and, thereby, saves Manu's life.

Śunahśepa. *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* contains several beautiful tales which form the basis of many later folk stories. Of these, the most celebrated is the story of Śunahśepa (7.13-18). King Harischandra, who is without progeny, prays to the God Varuna for a son. Varuna graciously grants the king's prayer and agrees to give him a son, on condition that the son is sacrificed to him (Varuna) later on. The king agrees and a son, who is named Rohita, is born to him. When Varuna asks the king to keep his word, the king makes one excuse after another, and, for breaking his word, is punished by Varuna who makes him fall ill with dropsy. After some time, the hapless king purchases Śunahśepa, son of the sage Ajigarta, to sacrifice him to Varuna and the God agrees to this. But when Śunahśepa is about to be sacrificed, Goddess Usha comes and saves his life and cures the king.

From the Epics and Puranas. The Epics and the Puraṇas contain numerous tales which are based on former folk stories and are clear bases for later folk tales of various kinds. For want of space, only two are mentioned here.

Devayānī-Śarmiṣṭha. Devayānī, the beloved daughter of Śukrācārya, and Śarmiṣṭha, the beloved daughter of Vṛṣaparvan, are close friends. They quarrel when, after a bath in the river, Śarmiṣṭha, by mistake, puts on the clothes of Devayānī and is chided by her. Śarmiṣṭha, thereupon, in anger, throws Devayānī into a dry well, from which she is rescued by king Yayāti who marries her.

In the meantime, Śarmiṣṭha has been given as a woman-servant to Devayānī by Vṛṣaparvan by way of placating Śukrācārya, who had threatened to leave the place as retaliation for the insult meted out to his beloved daughter Devayānī by Śarmiṣṭha. When, after marriage Devayānī goes to her husband's place, accompanied by Śarmiṣṭha, king Yayāti secretly marries the maidservant. Devayānī, as soon as she learns of this, leaves her husband in great rage. Śukrācārya curses Yayāti with premature senility (*jarā*), but on the king's pleadings, permits him to transfer his senility to others. Yayāti asks three of his sons to agree to accept his senility, but all flatly refuse. Only Puru, the fourth and the youngest, agrees to accept his father's senility. Yayāti is now free to lead a life of sensuous enjoyment for a long time, but finds that *bhōga* can never bring permanent bliss and peace, only *tyāga* can do so. So he takes back his senility from Puru, makes him king and goes away to the forest to seek spiritual uplift.

Śibi-Śyena. This well-known tale (Mahabharata, 3.131, 194, 13, 58), which has inspired so many later story writers, narrates the story of Indra who wants to test King Śibi, reputed to be a great benevolent man. Indra assumes the form of a hawk and chases Agni, in the form of a pigeon. The pigeon flees to king Śibi and seeks his protection. Thereupon, Sibi requests the hawk to spare the pigeon, but the hawk tells him that he is intensely hungry and the king must feed him. Whereupon the king offers to cut a piece of his own flesh, in weight equal to the pigeon, to feed the hawk. But the more he cuts off his own flesh, the heavier the pigeon gets. Then the king himself sits on the scales, offering his own body to satiate the hunger of the hawk. The gods, now pleased, reveal their identities to him and bless him.

The exhilarating story of Savitri and Satyavan is too well known to be recounted at length here.

Among the Puranas, the *Viṣṇu-purāṇā*, *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, etc. are mines of folk tales of various kinds and their influence on later literature is immense.

Fable Literature (Kathā-sāhitya)

Sanskrit fable literature is a very rich and extensive one. There is no doubt that it is a product of earlier folk-fables. It also contains the germs of later folk literature. The first work to be mentioned under the general head of 'Sanskrit Fable Literature' is undoubtedly the famous *Pañcatantra* which has been translated in many languages all over the world. It is generally supposed that this most attractive collection of fables was compiled during the 2nd–4th centuries. It is stated in the preface that Viṣṇuśarman composed these tales to teach the dull sons of king Amaraśakti. Because it is divided into five parts, it has been called *Pañcatantra*. The divisions are the *Mitra-lābha*, *Mitra-bheda*, *Kakolūkīya*, *Labdha-prāṇaśa* and *Aparīkṣita Kāraka*, In the *Pañcatantra* there are practically no philosophical or

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religious discourses, most of the tales relate to politics and the rules guiding everyday life.

Amongst the numerous heirs and descendants of the *Pañcatantra*, the *Hitopadeśa* composed by Narayanachandra in Bengal is, undoubtedly, the best. In the preface to this work, it is said that the *Hitopadeśa* was compiled from *Pañcatantra* and other works, like the *Kāmaṇḍakīyanīti-sūra* and was prepared to teach the sons of Sudarshana, the king of Pataliputra. The *Hitopadeśa* consists of four parts, namely the *Mitra-lābha*, *Suhṛd-bheda*, *Vigraha* and *Sandhi*.

Bṛhat-kathā composed by Guṇāḍhya, probably before the 1st century A.D. exists only in name now. The *Bṛhat-kathā* was abridged and adapted as the *Bṛhatkathā-ślokasaṁgraha*, which was composed in Nepal, and even in its incomplete form has 28 *sargas* running into 4539 verses, as the *Bṛhat-kathāmañjarī* by Kshemendra, the court poet of the Kashmir king Anantadeva (11th century), and as the *Kathāsaritsāgara* composed by Somadeva (11th century).

The *Dvātriṁśat-puttalikā* known also as *Siṁhāsana-dvātriṁśikā* and *Vikramāṅka-carita* is believed to have been compiled during the 13th century. When King Bhoja is about to sit on the dug-out throne of Vikramaditya with 32 dolls at his feet, the dolls come alive and each tells him a fable from folklore, for 32 consecutive days.

The *Śuka-saptati-kathā* of Cintāmaṇi Bhaṭṭa too occupies a glorious place in Sanskrit Fable Literature. It was composed after the 13th century. In this collection, the loyal Śuka, or parrot, tells Devadasa's wife a beautiful story for each of the 70 consecutive nights to prevent her going astray while her husband is away.

Another celebrated fable-collection is the *Vetāla-pañcaviṁśati* of Sivadasa. This is a very ancient work, and Kshemendra and Somadeva have included these fables in their *Bṛhat-kathā-mañjarī* and *Kathāsarit-sāgara* respectively. A Vetala, or a spirit inside a dead body, tells these tales to Vikramaditya for 25 consecutive nights.

Besides these collections, the *Puruṣa-parīkṣā* of Vidyapati, *Prabandhakośa* of Rajashekhara, *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi* of Merutunga and the like have enriched Sanskrit fable literature.

A few examples of fable literature, containing tales of folklore, are summarised here:

Fable of a Vulture and a Cat (Hitopadeśa, 1. 59-69). An old vulture, Jaradgava, lives in a hole in a big tree. A cunning cat comes there, falsely represents itself as a sage-like vegetarian cat, and manages to get shelter inside the hole. The cat then starts eating the young birds in the tree and leaves their bones inside the hole. When the distressed parents of the birds find the bones, they naturally think that it is the vulture Jaradgava who is responsible and kill him.

Moral: Never trust an unknown person.

Fable of an Overcautious Jackal (Hitopadeśa, 1. 165-168). A hunter, named Bhairava, goes to a forest in search of game. There he kills a deer. While returning with the carcass, he is attacked by a boar. The hunter's arrows find their target, but the hunter himself is mortally wounded. All both fall to the ground, a serpent too is killed, being crushed under their bodies. When, a short while later, a cunning jackal comes on the scene, it is overjoyed to find so many dead bodies for his food. He argues within himself, 'The body of the man will last for a month, those of the deer and the boar for two months, the body of the serpent for a day. So, let me today eat the tasteless, dry, sinew bow-string. But as soon he tries to do so, he springs an arrow which kills him.

Moral: Hoarding for future contingencies is good, but not overhoarding.

Fable of a Foolish Elephant (Hitopadeśa). The cunning jackals plan to kill a huge elephant called Karpūratilaka to solve their food problem. So, they send an old jackal to him who tells him, falsely, that all the animals in the forest have decided to make him their king. Tempted, the elephant follows the jackal for his coronation, but is trapped in a mire and is eaten up by the hungry jackals.

Moral: Cunning can do what cannot be done by sheer physical strength.

Fable of the Dead Mouse (Kathāsaritsāgara, pt. 1. p. 62). The son of a merchant, fatherless and poor, approaches a rich man for help; but being miserly, the rich man contemptuously gives him a dead mouse. Undaunted, the boy sells the dead mouse as food for cats and gets some Yava grains in return. He grinds the grains, mixes it with water and gives it to some woodcutters who give him two pieces of wood in return. He sells the wood and, in this fashion does a flourishing business. When prosperous, he makes a golden mouse and presents it to the rich man who started him off and is rewarded by the rich man giving his own daughter to him in marriage.

Folk Proverbs and Wise-sayings (Laukika Pravāda & Pravacana)

Proverbs and wise-sayings are another very interesting and intriguing part of folk literature. For, they are, so to speak, integrated formulae of the vast and variegated experience of the mass-mind; village elders and old ladies, village pandits and wise men, tillers of the soil, hewers of wood and drawers of water and all the rest.

There is no doubt that Sanskrit literature being the oldest one in the whole world, Sanskrit proverbs and wise sayings, too, must be as old as the literature itself. It is claimed by some that the Biblical proverb, 'Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked' (Samuel, 24: 13), is the oldest

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in the world. But proverbs were rampant in India right from the time of the Rigveda, generally supposed to be the oldest literature in the whole world, or at least composed many years before the Bible.

Sanskrit proverbs and saws are celebrated for their great philosophical, theological and ethical values on the one hand, as well as psychological, sociological and practical day-to-day life values on the other. They are also celebrated for their brilliant wit, humour, candour and lack of artificiality. They have been found to be immensely helpful in framing, guiding and improving national character.

Two examples relating to common life are:

(1) *Śaṭhe śāṭhyam samācaret*: Meet cunningness with cunningness. The whole verse is:
Svarṇamudrā bhavet tāmraṁ vaṇikaputraś ca markaṭah
Sāralyaṁ sarale kuryāt śaṭhe śāṭhyaṁ samācaret
The golden coins bcome copper,
The merchant's son, a monkey,
Meet straightforwardness with straightforwardness;
But cunning with cunning. (tr.)

The traditional story behind this is as follows:

Before going on a pilgrimage, a Brahmin entrusts his friend, a rich merchant, with a box full of gold coins. But the wily merchant steals the coins and replaces them with copper ones. On his return, the Brahmin is naturally very distressed to find his gold coins changed to copper ones. The merchant pleads innocence. Whereupon the Brahmin devises a plan of retaliation. He invites the merchant's five-year-old son to his house and decorates a monkey with his clothes and ornaments. When the merchant comes there to take his son back, the Brahmin innocently informs him that the boy has suddenly become a monkey. Enraged, the merchant files a law-suit against the Brahmin. When the Brahmin is called upon to defend himself, he recites the above verse and says to the Judge: 'If my gold coins can become copper ones, the merchant's son, too, can very well become a monkey.' The dishonest merchant is punished. And he returns the gold coins to the Brahmin to get back his son.

(2) *Vāṇijye vasate lakṣmīḥ*, 'The Goddess of Fortune resides in Trade'
Vāṇijye vasate lakṣmīh tadardhaṁ kṛṣikarmaṇi
Tadardhaṃ rajasevāyāṁ bhikṣāyām naiva naiva ca
The Goddess of Fortune resides in Trade
Half of that in Agriculture,
Half of that in Government Service,
None, none in Begging. (tr.)

Cāṇakya-ślokas. The famous *Cāṇakya-ślokas*, associated with the name of one celebrated for his great wit and shrewdness, have always occupied a central place in Sanskrit proverb literature and are immensely popular throughout India. Here are some examples of them:

(1) *Kaṇṭakenaiva kaṇṭakam*': a thorn by a thorn'!
Upakāragṛhītena śatruṇā śatrum uddharet
Padalagnaṃ karasthena kaṇṭakenaiva kaṇṭakam
With one enemy placated by favours
Destroy another enemy soon.
Just as a thorn inside the foot
Is plucked by another thorn held in the hand. (tr.)

(2) *Haṃsamadhye bako yathā:* 'like a heron in the midst of swans'.
Mātā śatruḥ pitā vairī yābhyaṃ putro no pāṭhyate
no śobhate sabhāmadhye haṃsamadhye bako yathā
The mother is an enemy, the father, too,
Who do not educate their son.
He (the son) cannot shine in a meeting,
Like a heron in the midst of swans. (tr.)

Folk Illustrative Aphorisms (Laukika-nyāyas)

Folk illustrative aphorisms, like folk proverbs and wise-sayings, spring from the combined and continued experiences of scholars, on the one hand, and laymen on the other. They constitute, so to speak, proofs or practical demonstrations—through easily intelligible examples—of the common truths contained in the proverbs and saws. In this sense, they, too, like the proverbs and wise-sayings, represent the mass-mind in all its variety. They shine in their inner brilliance, inherent wittiness, penetrating wisdom and refreshing originality.

These folk illustrative aphorisms seem to cover almost all aspects of life and Nature, as may be seen from these few examples:

Kākatāliya-nyāya (The Crow and the Tal Fruit). As a crow sits on the branch of a tree, a fruit falls from that branch. It is generally thought that the crow is the cause of the falling fruit. But in reality, the fruit being ripe, would have fallen at that moment, whether the crow sat near it or not, the crow's presence being merely accidental.

Moral: Be careful to attribute causes to effects—who knows what might be purely accidental.

Andha-golāngūla-nyāya (A Blind Man Hanging to the Tail of a Cow). A blind man, wishing to reach a particular place, seeks the advice of a cowherd. Following the instruction given to him, he catches hold of the tail of a cow that is scheduled to go to the place he wants to get to. The cow starts running very fast through thorny bushes and fields; and the poor blind man's body is nearly torn to pieces by the very sharp and poisonous thorns, the hard and thick branches, etc. When, with the greatest

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difficulty, he reaches his destination, he is accused of stealing the cow and is given a good beating.

Moral: Never take the advice of a fool.

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Sindhi

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Origin and Development

The history of Sindhi folk literature is as old as the Sindhi language itself. It is traced back to the beginning of the 8th century of the Christian era, when the local language of the lower Indus Valley began to distinguish itself from Apabhraṁsa by eliminating the peculiarities of the Middle Indo-Aryan stage and by developing various new phonological and grammatical features. The language of this transitional period is called Old Sindhi. It entered the New Indo-Aryan stage and fully established its separate entity as the Sindhi language during the later half of the 11th century A.D.

In spite of the fact that Sindhi folk literature begins in the 8th century A.D., there are various features available in it which have got their origin in the Old and the Middle Indo-Aryan literatures. A good number of folk tales, fables, legends, sayings, proverbs and anecdotes prevalent in the Sindhi folk literature have their seeds in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and *Apabhraṁśa* literature. The *Vedas*, Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranas have always remained main sources of inspiration for later writers and the common people of this country. Fables and tales of *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa*, stories of *Bṛihat-kathā*, *Kathā-sarit-sāgar*, *Vetāla-pañca-viṁśati*, *Siṁhāsana-dwātriṁśikā*, *Śuka-saptati* and *Jātaka* have always remained a fountain-head of different folk tales current nowadays not only in Sindhi, but also in other modern Indian languages.

Sindhi folk literature, besides preserving this literary heritage of ancient India to a considerable extent, has also borrowed some folk tales and legends from Arabic and Persian literature with some modifications. There is no doubt, that the main corpus of Sindhi folk literature is a production of the native spirit. It is based on indigenous characters and incidents of the lower Indus Valley and its adjacent regions, especially those of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Baluchistan and West Punjab.

The development of Sindhi folk literature can be divided conveniently into the following periods.

Early Period

The Period of Indigenous Legends Full of Valour and Romance (712–1520). The early period of Sindhi folk literature starts with the conquest of Sindh by Arabs in A.D. 712 and terminates with the defeat of native Samma rulers at the hands of Arghuns in 1520. The earliest written reference of folk songs in Sindhi is available in *Cacnāmah*, a chronicle originally written in Arabic during the 8th century and later translated into Persian by Ali Kufi in 1216. The work mainly narrates the conquest of Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim in 712 and is now available only in its Persian version. It is mentioned there that when Muhammad bin Qasim after the conquest of Brahmanabad marched towards the habitation of, Samma tribe, the people of that tribe welcomed him with songs and dances along with the music of drums and flutes (Amir Ahemad [tr.]—*Cacnāmah alias Fatehnamah Sindh*). Another writer Udyotan Suri of the 8th century has also appreciated in his Prakrit work *Kuvalaya-mālā-kahā* (written in 799) the people of Sindh for their love for music and their melodious songs.

The Sindhi folk literature of the early period has been preserved mostly by bards and minstrels through oral

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tradition. Bijal, Bhāgu Bhān and Sumaṅgu Cāraṇu are some of the well-known bards belonging to this period. The Sindhi folk literature of the early period consists mainly of ballads and legends narrating the valour and romance of kings and chieftans belonging to Sindh and its adjacent regions during this period. For example, the ballad of Dodo-Chanesar is famous for depicting vividly the valour of Dodo and his Sardars in a battle against Chanesar who invaded the kingdom of Dodo with the help of Allaudin. Similarly, romantic tales of Sasuī-Punhū, Umar-Māruī, Lila Canesar, Mūmal-Rāṇo, Suhiṇī-Mehār and Nūrī-Jām Tamācī are some of the tales of immortal love based upon actual happenings in Sindh during this period.

Besides, there are some myths and religious legends pertaining to incidents and characters of the early period. The legend of Ūḍerolāl is a solitary example related to Hindu religion. Ūḍerolāl or Amarlāl, also known as Lāl Sāī or Jhūlelāl is regarded an incarnation of God Varuṇa (God of Waters) who saved the Hindus of Sindh from the tyranny of a petty Muslim chief Mirkh Shah of Ṭhaṭṭa. Miracles of Lāl Sahbāz and Pīr Paṭho, the frequent changes in the course of the Sindhu river and some other local incidents of the period proved to be a sufficient source of inspiration for the masses, which in due course of time gave rise to different myths and legends.

Middle Period

The Period of Perso-Arabic Impact (1520–1843). The middle period of Sindhi folk literature starts with the rule of Arghuns in Sindh and terminates with the conquest of the region by the British in 1843. The indigenous legends of valour and romance which were sung by bards and minstrels in the early period gained more popularity during the middle period through oral tradition. Some Sindhi folk-tales so fascinated Sufi saint poets of the region that they selected them as a medium for expressing their poetic emotions and philosophical thoughts. They usually identified themselves with some characters of the folk-tales and gave vent to their mystic realization of the union between God and an individual soul. Various stanzas and couplets of Sufi saint poets like Shah Abdul Latif (Ṣāh Abdul Latīf; 1689–1752) and Sachal Sarmast (Sacal Sarmast, 1739–1829) have gained popularity not only among the educated and elite classes of Sindh, but also among common folks and illiterate villagers of the region.

The most significant trend in the Sindhi folk literature of the middle period seems to be an impact of Arabic and Persian literature, which gave rise to the borrowing and adaptation of legends and folk-tales of these languages into Sindhi.

The earliest references and allusions to Sindhi folk-tales in the written form have been noted in the poetry of Shah Abdul Karim (Sāh Abdul Karīm, 1537–1622). But, it is during the 18th century that a beginning was made to record in writing the different legends and folk-tales in Sindhi, which had so far been preserved through oral tradition only. The earliest folk-tale in the Sindhi language which has come to light in the written form seems to be *Lailā-Majnū* written by Fazil Shah in 1723. Some of the other manuscripts of Sindhi folk-tales written during the 18th century are as follows: *Bānko Bāhirām* by Chhato Khati, *Kisso Ṣah Bahirām* by Shaikh Ibrahim and *Yūsuf Zulekha* by Muhammad Maluk. The trend of introducing folk-tales in the long narrative poems continued in the 19th and the 20th centuries also.

Modern Period

The Period of Compilation and Publication. The modern period begins with the advent of the British rule in Sindh, i.e. since 1843. Although some folk-poets continued to narrate old folk-tales and legends of Sindh in prose as well as in verse, yet the present period is important mainly due to immense momentum in the collection, compilation and publication of the Sindhi folk literature which started meagrely during the 18th century. Another significant trend of this period is the adaptation of themes from folk literature by Sindhi prose writers and poets in their writings, often with a touch of new interpretations.

Among the western scholars, Captain George Stack was the first to include the legend of *Soraṭha ain Rai Diyach* and selected Sindhi folk tales for children in his *Grammar of Sindhi Language*, published in 1849. F. J. Goldsmid published a folk tale of Sasuī-Punhā with its English translation in verse in 1863. Similarly, the Education Department of Sindh and some private publishers began to collect and publish Sindhi folk literature. As a result, a good number of Sindhi folk-tales and ballads were brought into light by the end of the 19th century, which were published again and again during the present century. The study of Sindhi folk literature has received still more attention after independence both in India and Sind (Pakistan). Thus, a large corpus of this literature representing its different branches has been critically compiled and published.

Branches of Sindhi Folk Literature

Sindhi folk literature collected and published so far shows ample variety of subject-matter and form. It can be classified broadly on the criterion of form into four branches: (i) folk poetry, (ii) folk narratives in prose, (iii) minor folk utterances and (iv) folk-drama.

Folk Poetry. Sindhi folk poetry is very rich in quality, variety of themes and quantity. It may be classified into the following main categories.

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Folk-songs. This category of Sindhi folk poetry is full of tender emotions and sentiments expressed by the people on different occasions. Folk-songs generally do not contain any narration of story and are popular due to their melodious tune and style of singing. Sindhi literature has a large number of folk-songs which have been distinguished by separate terms; for example, *Jamālo*, *Moro*, *Belaṇu* and *Chalo* pertain to the sentiment of love and romance; *Hamaraco*, *Mandhīaṛo* and *Valāṛo* are some of the songs pertaining to particular functions of daily life. *Hamaraco* is the song of labourers while working in fields; *Mandhīaṛo* is the song of womenfolk sung while churning the curds. *Valāṛo* is sung by cattle-boys while bringing back the cattle home in the afternoon. The folk-songs sung by women at the time of marriage and various other ceremonies attached to it are called *Lāḍā*, *Sihrā* or *Gīca*. It is still customary for many well-to-do families of urban areas to invite professional women well-versed in the traditional art of singing *Lāḍā* songs on the occasion of marriage. These folk-songs are generally sung with the music of *Ḍholaka* (a small drum) and *Thālī* (a plate of bronze or brass) and are accompanied with the performance of spontaneous dance to the resounding echoes of the chorus singing. Dirges sung at the time of death are called *Marsio*, *Osāro*, *Kedāro* or *Pāra*. The devotional songs popular among Sindhi Muslims sung in praise of God or His Prophet are called *Madāha*, *Maulūdu*, *Munājāta* or *Manāqibo*. Similarly, *Orāṇā*, *Pañjirā Upaṅga*, *Saloka*, *Sākhyū*, *S'abada* are some of the varieties of devotional songs popular among Sindhi Hindus.

To illustrate Sindhi folk-songs, a few stanzas from *Jamālo* are given below. It is one of the most popular folk-songs and is sung in chorus to the rhythm of a kettledrum along with a folk-dance of the same name. The theme of the song is probably based on the story of a youth, named Jamalo, whose separation and final return home are being related in the song by his sweetheart.

Ho Jamalo
Jamalo jatani sā — Ho Jamalo!
Laṛī viyo lāṛa ḍāh — Ho Jamalo!
Jāhī khe soni mūḍicīcamē — Ho Jamalo!
Jāhī khe suhiṇo lakuṇu hatha mē — Ho Jamalo!...

Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: Jamalo went, with camel-men,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: He went afar, down to Laṛ,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: He wore a golden ring, on his little finger,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: He had a fine wand, in his hand,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: His eyes were nice,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: His teeth like wreathed pearls
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: His hair curls bear-like
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!

(After mentioning most of the features)....
Leader: Happy ho! he has come,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!
Leader: Auspicious is his return,
Chorus: Ho Jamalo!

(tr. Baloch, N.A., *Loka Gīta*, p. 4)

Narrative Folk-poems: These folk-poems generally contain a brief narration of some incident or a deed. *Vāqiāti Baito* (poems describing some historical event), *Māuajat* (poems pertaining to miracles of Prophet Muhammad), *Munāzirā* (Disputations) are some of the folk-poems belonging to this category. *Munāzirā* poems are a peculiar feature of the Sindhi folk poetry. They contain disputations in verse composed in the form of dialogues between two parties striving to establish their excellence. The parties may be two abstract ideas personified (e.g. Love and Reason; Youth and Age), or two heroines from the well-known romances (e.g. Sasui and Marui), or two things (e.g. cap and turban), or a man and an animal, or two birds. In these poems, the folk poets have maintained a high standard of achievement both in the development of theme as well as in the style of expression.

Ballads. Sindhi folk poetry has a good number of ballads delineating at length the indigenous legends of valour and romance of kings and chieftains of the early period belonging to Sindh and its adjacent regions. Dodo-Chanesar, is a well-known ballad of the period depicting the prowess of Dodo in a battle against his brother Chanesar. The ballad of Moriro narrates beautifully the wisdom and valour of a lame fisherman Moriro, who took revenge of the death of his six brothers by killing a crocodile, in the whirlpool of Kalāci, which had devoured Moriro's brothers. The ballad of *Soraṭh-Rāi Ḍiyāc* emphasizes the generosity of a king Rāi Ḍiyāc who severed his own head with a sword and gave it in alms to a bard Bījal. The well-known ballads delineating the immortal love of Sasui-Punhū, Suhiṇī-Mehār, Mūmal-Rāṇo, Līlā-Canesar, etc. belong to this category.

Folk Narratives in Prose. Sindhi folk literature abounds in folk narratives told in prose form. It should be noted that such compositions generally contain small verses for making the narration more interesting and for emphasizing the central theme of the story. The entire available corpus of folk narratives in Sindhi prose may be classified into the following major categories:

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(1) Folk-tales of kings and queens, princes and princesses, wise ministers and merchants.
(2) Fairy-tales.
(3) Folk-tales of wisdom. These are mostly based upon incidents from daily life and do not contain any supernatural characters. Famous tales of Akbar and Birbal come under this category.
(4) Fables and tales for imparting moral to children taken from *Pañcatantra* and *Hitopadeśa*.
(5) Semi-historical legends. Besides the ballads of romance and valour belonging to the early and the middle periods, which are current in the form of prose narratives also, there are a considerable number of semi-historical legends in prose, containing small verses of two or three lines, e.g. *Lākho Phūlāṇī*, *Kārāiṛo Sammo*, *Bhiryo Gāroṛī* and *Vikyo Ḍātār*.
(6) Myths and religious folk-tales. There are a good number of myths and folk-tales pertaining to Hindu religion and miracles of saints. For example, folk-tales based upon biographies of Uḍerolāl, Shravana Kumar, Durva Bhagat, Guru Gorakhnath, Bharathirhari, Gopichand, etc. belong to this category. Besides, myths pertaining to fairs, festivals, holy days of Hindu religion are placed under this class, e.g. *Kathās* of different days of a week, *Kathās* of *Vṛtas* (fasts) like *Ganeś-Choth*, *Ṭijirī*, myths of Holika, Mahalakshmi, etc., are popular among the Hindu population of Sindh.

Minor Folk Utterances. The third branch of Sindhi folk literature consists of minor folk utterances, which, though very small in form, have great socio-cultural importance. Idioms, proverbs, riddles, allegorical enigmas, incantations, charms, abusive terms, taboo words are minor folk utterances which require critical study. For example, a proverb 'Bāmbhaṇu Bāhā lāi muhitāju' ('A Brahmin gets a bride after great difficulty') refers to social condition of the Brahmins who due to conservative outlook in the selection of a bride from a particular endogamous group of their community, often found it difficult to get a suitable girl and remained unmarried. '*Maulā ko mīhu vasāi, ta Kāira chuṭani kama khā*' ('God! Send down rain, that we lazy people may get a respite from work') indirectly refers to scarcity of rainfall in Sindh. It also shows that whenever there was a downpour, people used to leave their work and enjoy themselves. An idiomatic usage *Per me Chancharu athasi* (He has Saturn in his feet, i.e. he is wandering) denotes a common belief of the people that Śani planet caused misery and unrest. Some more examples of typical Sindhi proverbs are as follows:

(a) Piu Sandasi pehū kuṭyū, ḍāḍe sandasi dhāṇā,
age puchyāū the zātipāti, hāṇe puchani thā nāṇā.
(His father used to pound parched rice, his grandfather, coriander seeds. Formerly caste was inquired about, but now wealth).
(b) Kute jo puchu bārhā mahinā naṛa me vijhije tabi ḍiṅge jo ḍiṅgo.
(You may put a dog's tail in a hubble-bubble pipe for twelve months, still when you draw it out it will remain crooked). cf. Crooked by nature is never made straight by nurture. (tr.)
(c) Khūhani jā vāta band thī vañani,
māṇhuni jā vāta band na thiyani.
(You may close the mouths of wells, but not the mouths of men). (tr.)

Sindhi folk literature abounds in riddles and enigmas (sayings in which meaning is concealed under obscure language) which have been distinguished minutely and assigned separate terms; for instance, *Pirolī* is a general term synonymous to the English word 'riddle'. It literally means, something to be thought about and solved. In Sindhi, different types of *Pirolī* are called by separate terms. *Dustāg* is a puzzle in similitudes. *Ḍiṭha* or *Ḍiṭha-Pirolī* is a riddle based on something actually seen or visualized. *Māma* or *Mu'amma* is a riddle based on imagery or idea. *Gurū-Celo Pirolī* is based upon the form of conversation between a preceptor and his disciple. Some examples of Sindhi *Pirolī* in English translation are as follows:

(1) Green is the creeper with fruits white
One cannot taste but can sight.
(Answer: the sky and the stars).

(2) Dustāg Pirolī:
'It is round like a hedge-hog, but it is not a hedge-hog;
It has beard like men, but it is not a man;
It wears yellow robes, but it is not a Sanyasi
It is full of water, but it is not a water skin—
Say, what is it?
(Answer: coconut).

(Baloch, Nabi Bux Khan, *Pirolyun, Dithun, Mu'ammaun ain Bola*, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad Sind, 1965, English Introduction, p. 2)

Folk-drama. Folk-drama is one of the important means of entertainment for the common people. But, due to the impact of modern civilization and culture, which provided more accessible means of entertainment, the folk-drama has suffered a great set-back. In spite of that, it has been retained in some form up to this day. The performance of *Ramalīlā* at the time of Vijaya-Dashami and Dipavali, and that of *Krishnalīlā* on the occasion of Krishna-Janmashtami are popular forms of folk-dramas prevalent throughout the country. *Bhagat* and *Chauki* (gathering of devout people

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for singing religious songs) are peculiar types of folk-dramas prevalent among Sindhi Hindus. Both these types have religious significance, in that a *Bhagat* (the main singer) usually accompanied by two or three associates, narrates religious legends in prose as well as in poetry. The main *Bhagat* generally wears a turban and a long robe at ankle length and while narrating a legend he sings and dances to the music of the harmonium, and tabala (two small drums). Another type of Sindhi folk drama is *Tamāśo*, generally organized by rich Muslim families of Sindh. In *Tamāśo*, professional male as well as female singers are invited to sing and dance on joyful festive occasions. The performance of *Sāṅga* (personation of mythological characters) on the festival of Holi, and puppet-shows are other types of Sindhi folk-drama.

The different branches of Sindhi folk literature have been explained briefly here along with their major varieties. However, it should be noted that in each branch further classification can be made on the basis of subject-matter, form, style of singing or narration, etc. Sindhi folk literature is closely connected with the life style of Sindhis. It faithfully delineates different facets of Sindhi folk culture, such as, folk-beliefs, folk-rituals and practices, folk-ways of entertainment and folk arts and crafts.

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Tamil

R. AIYASWAMI

Tolkappiyar establishes the fact that there were abundant literary compositions prior to his grammatical work, *Tolkāppiyam*. He throws some light on the tradition of an unfettered and unwritten oral literature and specifically defines a few of its components, such as *pici*, the riddle; *mudušol*, the proverb; *paṇṇatti*, the song; and the tale.

Sangham Literature

The literature of the last Sangham period has been grouped into Ten Idylls (*Pattuppāṭṭu*) and Eight Anthologies (*Eṭṭuttohai*) which provide valuable information on the cultural life of the Tamils. These collections speak of minstrels and bards who had preserved the tradition of oral literature by singing in the courts and banquet halls of kings and chieftains, on battlefields, in palaces and in humble cottages. These songs apart, most of the songs and dances of the Tamils have a close relationship to the five ancient physiographical divisions of land: hilly tracts, desert areas, forest ranges, arable regions and beaches. Each division has its patron deity, music and dance patterns, occupations, festivals and social customs.

The presiding deity in the hilly tracts is Lord Murugan. His priests, while in a state of trance, sing soul-stirring lyrics invoking His grace. In the grain-rich farms, women keep day-long vigil to drive away parrots and other birds seeking food from the fields. The 'weapon' of these women is, invariably, high-pitched full-throated song. The same women employ soothing music to alleviate the pains of their menfolk mauled by animals. In the arable regions men and women sing and dance in groups. On the coast farmers operating water-lifts sing exquisite duets.

All the songs and dances to be heard and seen on such occasions as baling water, dehusking paddy, celebrating

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festivals, etc. have been mentioned in Sangham poetry, though, unfortunately, not the contents of the oral literature transmitted by them.

Śilappadhikāram

Iḷaṅgō Aḍihaḷ (c. 2nd–3rd century A.D.), the author of *Śilappadhikāram* (The Story of the Anklet), the story of Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki, was the first Tamil poet to incorporate folk motifs in great poetry. The events of his narrative are spread over the Cōḷa, Pāṇḍiya and Cēra kingdoms, covering all Tamilnadu, and deal with the five traditional divisions of land.

Ilango obviously had unlimited scope to create a variety of delightful songs and dances in folk style. This is revealed in the songs sung by Kovalan and Madhavi before their separation, the awe-inspiring dances of the hunters witnessed by Kovalan and Kannaki on their way to Madurai, the rhythmic dance designs woven by the milkmaids praying to ward off evil and bad omens, and the wonder-struck dances of the gypsies at the rare sight of Kannaki being transported in a celestial vehicle.

Medieval and Modern Works

After Ilango, there have been many poets and scholars who have drawn freely from oral literature to enrich their writing. The Saiva and Vaiṣṇava saint-poets, Māṇikkavācakar, Kulasēkharar, Periyāḷvār and Tiru Maṅgai Āḷvār have all given a new look to the folk art form in their lullabies, play songs, swing songs, festival songs, and songs of divine love.

Fresh literary patterns have also sprung from folk literature. *Paḷḷu*, a pastoral poem dealing with the life of the *paḷḷar* (agricultural labourers), and *Kuṟavañji* (literally, a damsel of the *Kuṟavan* class), depicting the life of the gypsies, are examples. The outstanding poems of this genre are *Mukkūḍal Paḷḷu* and *Kuṟṟalakkuṟavañji*.

Gopala Krishna Bharati (Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Bhārati, mid-19th century) and Annamalai Reddiyar (Aṇṇāmalai Reddiyār, 1861–91) have adopted folk melodies to great advantage. Bharati had used folk-song patterns, such as the *noṇḍic-cindu*, and also *kīrttana* forms in his *Nandanār Caritrak-Kīrttanai*. His songs continue to thrill people to this day. Reddiyar invented a new pattern of popular song called *kāvaḍic-cindu*, a lengthy song full of rhyme and alliteration, modelled on the short couplets sung by devotees of Muruha to overcome the tedium and hardship they experience while climbing His hills carrying the *kāvaḍi* (a pole across the shoulder with a basket at each end, holding an offering of rice or milk).

Given below are the *pallavi* and one *caraṇam* (out of three) from a *kīrttana* song in Nandanar in the *senjuruṭṭi* rāga, *ādi tāḷa*:

Pallavi

Sannidhi varalāmō — svāmi
Darisanam taralāmō.

Caraṇam

Illaṟa vāḷvām pani mūḍi
Irundēnanṟō miha vāḍi
Allum pahalum koṇḍāḍi
Aṟiyēn Kanaka sabhai nāḍi (Sannidhi)

My Lord, may I come into Thy Presence and wilt Thou vouchsafe a vision unto me? The mist of the worldly life had enveloped me and I had indeed withered. I had so far not sought your Golden Dance Hall and had never praised it, day or night. (tr.)

Here both the initial and the end-on rhymes have an intoxicating effect on the devout singer. These songs were also popular in schools as songs for the *kōlāṭṭam* games.

The line below is from a *Kāvaḍic-cindu:*

Puḷḷik-kalāpa mayil bhāgan. — śakti
Pudalvanāna gana yōgan, — malai

pōlat — tān tiraṇḍu
kōlap-panniraṇḍu vākan, — nal
vi - vēkan.

These lines are in praise of Muruhan:

He is mounted on the peacock with the spotted plumage. He had the privilege of being the son of Śakti. He has twelve handsome round shoulders, strong like the hills. He is the Good and the Wise. (tr.)

This is only one line of a song of four lines (by Reddiyar), all the lines having initial rhyme. The special feature of the song is its end-on rhyme in the four parts of the lines, such as *bhāgan, yōgan, vākan, vi-vēkan* (g, h and k are all written as 'k' in Tamil). This feature takes different forms in the various verses.

A similar popular poem of the folk-song type is the *Kiḷikkaṇṇi* by Subbarāyasvāmi (a head constable of the 19th century). Its quaint musical and rhythmic effect is so simple yet so profound that no *bharatanāṭya* performance is considered complete without a few of its couplets. A young girl who pines for the love of Muruha pours forth her heart to her pet parrot:

Māḍu manai pōnāl enna,
Makkaḷ suṟṟam pōnāl enna
Kōḍi sembōn ponāl enna — kiḷiyē,
Kuṟu nahai pōdum aḍi.

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I care not if I lose land and cattle,
I care not if I lose a million gold pieces,—
I care not if I lose kith and kin,
— O parrot,
His loving smile will do. (tr.)

The great folk appeal of all these songs is their simple thoughts, expressed in easy language and rendered in exquisite music.

A number of outstanding lyrics of Subrahmanya Bharati (Subrahmaṇya Bhārati, 1882–1921) are household songs in Tamilnadu, mainly because of their well-known folk tunes. He has also successfully used folk styles of story-telling in his prose narratives. Even Saint Thyagaraja (1767–1847), the leading Telugu composer of Carnatic music from the heart of Tamilnadu, has unhesitatingly borrowed tunes from the oral tradition for some of his *Bhajana Sampradāya kritis* and songs in *Naukā Caritram*.

Folk-songs

Tamil folk literature may conveniently be arranged into six divisions—songs, ballads, plays, tales, proverbs and riddles.

It is but natural that songs form a sizeable portion of this literature. Their brevity and rhythmic music make them easy to remember and transmit. Apart from their intrinsic musical and poetic values, folk-songs also provide posterity with an easily accessible window to a panoramic view of life in the past.

Folk-songs in Tamil contain all the ingredients of immortal poetry. They are the shining repositories of the entire gamut of human emotions and reflect pleasure and pain, anger and compassion, humour, love and devotion.

Though they are generally anonymous, it is believed that a few of them at least have had written forms to begin with, that they are either remnants of lost literature or stray verses warped unrecognizable by usage. Yet some theorists assign the authorship of these songs to individuals who are well-known poets or little-known commoners. The compositions are likely to have undergone substantial alterations in the course of the oral tradition, after they had been sung by generations of people.

Since the composition and the music complement each other in folk-songs, the author and the musician are not usually different. The author himself sings and the singer himself composes. Consequently the musical content of the songs have remained almost constant through the ages, the tunes being easily identifiable. *Kummi*, *noṇḍic-cindu*, *ānandak-kaḷippu*, *temmāngu* and *āḍam* have been sung from time immemorial.

Tamil folk-songs, which have dominated the lives of men and women from the cradle to the grave for centuries, can be classified broadly into eight categories. The categories are: cradlesongs (*tālāṭṭu*), play-songs (*āṭṭappāṭṭu*), love-songs (*kādalpāṭṭu*), marriage-songs (*kalyāṇappāṭṭu*), work-songs (*toḻilpāṭṭu*), festival songs (*tiruviḻāppāṭṭu*), devotional songs (*bhaktippāḍal*) and mourning songs (*oppāri*).

Cradlesongs (Tālāṭṭu). Cradlesongs are immortal, because they have been handed down from mother to daughter while lulling the new-born to sleep. Born of the self-effacing love of the mother for her offspring, these songs are notable for the variety of their themes. Quite often the mother gathers her phrases from a dreamland of gold and diamonds, even though her dwelling place is but a small thatched hut, and the cradle is no more than a piece of rough rag. She sings:

Sleep, my darling, sleep,
In the cradle of gold,
Moulded to shape
And fitted with shafts of diamonds!

Sleep, my prince, sleep,
Flowers I have gathered
From plants galore,
And with a needle of gold
Strung them together, for you to wear!

Sleep, my baby, sleep
Gold I have kneaded
To adorn your forehead
With a graceful *tilak*,
And listen!
The Cuckoo itself has flown in
From the mango grove,
To sing a lullaby to you! (tr.)

Play-songs (Āṭṭappāṭṭu). The earliest play-songs are nursery rhymes. As children grow up and learn to walk and speak, they gather at convenient courtyards, especially during moonlit nights, and revel in song and play. Some of their songs have no meaning, but their rhyme and rhythm linger in memory for long.

A favourite pastime of the children is their imitative presentation of a marriage between animals. In one instance, the bridegroom is a screeching little mouse and the children sing:

We are here to celebrate
The marriage of a kingly mouse,
A palanquin built of the stems of maize
Stands by for the wedding procession;
And let us summon the cobra to bear it aloft.

Let us also invite the lizard to witness the show;
Let the frog be the musician
To blow the bass bugle;
And the cock to sound the horn. (tr.)

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Love-songs (Kādalpāṭṭu). The boys and girls grow into young men and women. Playful mirth gives place to the flowering of unblemished love. But the path of love is not smooth. In a typical case, the lovers find themselves separated. Yet the young man is firm. He wants to assure his beloved that he is determined to be united with her. His assurance takes the form of an oath and spotlights an ancient custom even now prevalent in some rural areas. To prove one's resolve and honesty, it is customary to throw a dhoti on the ground and step across it. This love-song describes the custom in a forceful manner:

United together,
We stand comparison
To a pair of bulls
Yoked to a pleasure cart,
To pull it in unison,
But, alas, bad times have separated us
And made us live far apart.

You are away in Madurai
Like an inaccessible star in the sky;
And I languish in Salem
Unable to foresee the day of our union.

Even the stones embrace each other;
And the fish have unbroken contact
With the waters of the sea;
Then, why should the world frown
At my holding you in my arms?

However, if you and I
Have a single minded devotion to love,
We shall lift up to the sky
Even the hillock named Sikandar.

Oh, my dear, the peahen of my heart,
I shall never, never forsake you,
If proof is required,
I shall throw my dhoti down on the earth
At the temple of Mīnākṣi
And in Her presence step across it. (tr.)

Marriage-songs (Kalyāṇappāṭṭu). When mutual love fructifies and culminates in marriage, there is boundless happiness all round. The entire hamlet gathers to witness the marriage ceremony. Such ceremonies differ from community to community. In certain areas, the village barber has the privilege of blessing the young couple first. He sits in the courtyard and recites a long poem of benediction.

Describing a tribal marriage, a song lists the presents the bride will carry with her to her new home.

Greengram small and sweet
Bought at ten measures for a silver coin;
Eight bundles of betel leaves;
Seven hundred pieces of areca nuts,
And to match her round knotted hair
A fanciful jewel presented by the loving father-in-law;

Pongali, the bride, is really lucky!
So come all of you, let us bless the couple
And sprinkle turmeric water on them. (tr.)

Work-songs (Toḷilpāṭṭu). Marriage means more work and more responsibilities. The husband tills the fields and prepares the land for cultivation. Women workers invoke the blessings of Indra, the lord of heaven, in lilting songs, while transplanting rice seedlings. Men operate water-lifts to the tune of meaningful duets at which, legends say, Kambar, the greatest of Tamil poets, stood wonder-struck.

The wife carries cold rice, gruel and fresh meal to the field where her partner in life is engaged in continuous work. At leisure, she sings and spins on the wheel and barters the yarn for articles of food at the nearby weekly market.

The aim of all agricultural operations is a good harvest and the harvest season is a period of great rejoicing. The predominantly agricultural economy of Tamilnadu accounts for the very large number of work-songs.

This is a song sung at the harvest:

The summer harvest is on!
The field beside the betel garden
Is ripe and ready;
Glass bangles gleam and jingle.

As the maiden moves her sickle
Across the paddy stalk.
Swiftly and deftly to the rhythm of her song.

But alas, the music and the glitter
Enslave neighbouring hearts
And clog the smooth flow of work.

Yonder, the cunning girl
With feigned fatigue,
Throws a bewitching look
At her lover gathering the harvest in bundles.
And sure her share of the load
Is bound to be light. (tr.)

Besides the farmers, there are boatmen, fisherfolk, cart-drivers, masons, women at household work, roadlayers and industrial workers who have songs of their own to suit their environment and avocations.

Festival Songs (Tiruviḻāppāṭṭu). *Poṅgal*, the festival of harvest, is but an expression of a dream come true. The

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farmer is happy at the rich harvest. He is grateful to the men and women and the dumb cattle who have helped him achieve his target. He feels he is only a trustee charged with the distribution of the life-giving food. So, when the harvest is threshed and the paddy heaped, he sings the command:

Bring the golden bowl
And measure the paddy,
A portion to the temple priest,
A portion to the conch blower,
A portion to the farm worker,
And
A portion to his beloved girl.

Bring the golden bowl
And measure the paddy
A portion to the blacksmith,
A portion to the carpenter,
A portion to the potter,
A portion to the barber,
And
A portion to the washerman.

Bring the bamboo winnow
And heap the paddy
To measure again,
A portion to the helpless widow,
And
A portion to the wandering mendicant. (tr.)

Distribution over, the rest of the paddy is carried home in cart-loads. The farmer is happy, Nature herself is happy. Cowherds cut new flutes from bamboo stems and the entire countryside fills with sweet melody. The cattle prick their ears in delight and wander about carefree, as though in preparation for the day following *Poṅgal*, their own day of rejoicing. This day is dedicated to the cattle and is known as *Paṭṭi Nōnbu*. *Paṭṭi* is the enclosure in the fields where cattle rest for the night, and *nōnbu* is a festival.

For the farmer in some parts of Tamil Nadu, *Paṭṭi Nōnbu* is more important than any other celebration. Arrangements begin early in the morning when the whole family, dressed in its best, moves to the fields to the accompaniment of drums and bugles. In the evening, improvised ovens are put up round the cattle enclosures and *poṅgal*, the ceremonial sweetened boiled rice, is prepared. The cattle are bathed, their horns polished and decorated and their foreheads adorned with turmeric and *kumkum* paste. The sacred poṅgal is first offered to them. The head of the family himself walks round reverently with a refrain on his lips:

Come, my dear cattle,
Come wash your hands:
The *Poṅgal* is ready here and now.
Come on lords of the farm,
Come, wash your mouth
And partake of the sacred rice. (tr.)

It is indeed a touching scene, symbolic of the boundle love the farmer has for his cattle, a love born as mu from his sense of gratitude as from his innate compassi for the dumb animals.

The peaceful rural atmosphere is traumatized when t rains fail. Starvation faces the villagers. They decide appease Varuna, the rain-god, by a show of utter helples ness, and have recourse to songs of prayer.

On other occasions, wild animals from nearby fore create havoc in the fields and hamlets. The villagers mobil themselves into parties of hunters, one male member fro each household and one dog from each farm. With her songs on their lips and deadly weapons in their hands, t hunters march into the forests, beating folk drums all t time.

Devotional Songs (Bhaktippāḍal). For the masses there no dividing line between the mundane and the divine. golden thread of devotion binds, unseen, all their actio and aspirations together. At every step they invoke, song and rhythm, the grace of Lord Vināyaka. Th believe that once His name is uttered, evil departs. Wi euphoric singing and frenzied dancing, they carry offe ings to Lord Muruhan and to Māriamman, the dread goddess of disease and death. They celebrate temple fes vals with great devotion and establish ever-increasi contact with Aiyanār and Ellaiamman, the guardi deities of their boundaries.

Ellaiamman figures prominently in a ritual in which t commonfolk endeavour to obtain divine guidance throu a lamp. Her presence is invoked by lamp light by the hi pitched singing of priests.

O, mother, our guardian deity,
Come, O peerless one.
You were there even before the earth was born;
You existed even before time came into being;
Come, flanked by your warriors stern,
With fire and blood
Heralding your approach!
Mother, I entreat you, I beg of you,
Come and dwell a little while
In this little lamp of mine.

Mourning Songs (Oppāri). Love, heroism and even d tion give place to despondency and sorrow when d strikes. All the villagers mourn and fast till the rites are over. The dirge, where women mourn bit moves the most hard-hearted of listeners. Quite a nu of songs are on-the-spot compositions, rarely record

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writing and, perhaps, rarely repeated. Technically known as *oppāri* (lament for the dead), they employ different phraseology and epithets to cover all relatives, including father, mother, husband, children and grandchildren.

Mourning songs are known for their fluent diction, depth of feeling and frequent repetition of phrases. A typical song reflects the sorrow of a mother wailing the loss of her daughter:

If I sit beneath a tree in blossom
And give expression to my agony
At the loss of my darling daughter,
Even the inanimate tree
Will be so moved
That it will cease to blossom any more.

If I sit beneath a fruit bearing tree
And give expression to my agony
At the loss of my beloved daughter,
Even the inanimate tree
Will be so moved
That it will cease to yield any more. (tr.)

Ballads

Tamil ballads describe the emotions found in folk-songs. In addition, they have stories to tell. Hence they may be termed epics in oral literature.

Some of them are attributed to a poet of the 16th–17th centuries who is named Puhalendi (Puhaḷēndi) after the famous poet of that name who sang *Naḷaveṇba* (the Story of Nala) in the 13th century. The style and narration are captivating. All of them are notable for their simplicity of language. Ideas and phrases are repeated, as a help to memory, in the same ballads and also from ballad to ballad.

The poetic metre is generally four feet to the line, the first and third invariably alliterating. Often couplets are employed. The metre changes whenever the gypsy appears, and lullabies and dirges are introduced. But the whole ballad is one long poem.

Folk-songs are sung by particular persons on particular occasions. Ballads have no such restrictions, as they provide mass enjoyment. They possess one more advantage: they can be accompanied instrumentally. In the Tirunelveli and Nagerkoil areas, the popular group singing of folk poetry is called *Villuppāṭṭu*.

Tamil ballads may be divided into four categories, epic-inspired, legendary, social and historical.

Epic-inspired Ballads. Epic-based ballads adopt characters from the epics, but not the episodes. For example, in the stories of Alli and Pavaḷakkoḍi, Arjuna and Krishna feature prominently. However, these stories are innovations and are not found in the epic Mahabharatam. Alli is the Amazon-like queen of Madurai who has a commanding personality; Pavaḷakkoḍi belongs to a nearby kingdom, rich in coral wealth. Arjuna marries both of them with the connivance of Krishna. There are scores of such ballads.

Legendary Ballads. Among the legendary ballads, the stories of Kāttavarāyan and Madurai Vīran are outstanding. Kattavarayan is created and sent by Lord Siva as a watchman to a flower garden where Sakhi Pārvati is immersed in penance. But Kattavarayan behaves in an unbecoming manner with the seven Celestial Virgins who visit the place to have a bath. They appeal to Lord Siva for help and He curses Kattavarayan.

Madurai Viran, born of a royal family but brought up by a cobbler, is known for his heroism. He abducts Bommi, the daughter of the local chieftain. Later, grief-stricken, he cuts off his head with his own hands before Goddess Minakshi. He is later deified and his idol installed in the precincts of Her temple at Madurai.

Another unique ballad is *Kapilai Kathai*. Here, a cow is seized by a hungry tiger. The cow asks to be allowed to feed her calf for the last time. The tiger agrees. The cow goes and returns as promised. Her return to the jaws of death brings about a miraculous change of heart in her captor.

This theme is very common in Tamil literature. At a very early period, a pious singer takes the place of the cow and a ghost that of the tiger. The singer sings his songs in the Viṣṇu temple of Tirukkuṛunguḍi and his selfless devotion is celebrated even today in the Viṣṇu temples and Vaiṣṇava houses as the *Kaiśika ekādaśi* (in the month of Kārttikai), *Kaiśika* being the tune he gifted to the ghost.

Social Ballads. Social ballads are not many in number. The available few describe the tyranny of feudal lords, the misery of the poor and the difficulties faced by women in family life. Inter-caste marriages are strictly forbidden and cruelly punished. The ballad of Muttuppaṭṭan, a brahmin youth who marries Bommakka and Timmakka, daughters of a cobbler, makes tragic reading.

Nallathaṅgāḷ Kathai, a popular ballad, is an unusually tragic one. It narrates the cruelty of a brother's wife which ends in the death of Nallathangal and her seven children. The ballad is sung even today by wandering street beggars and its quaint, mournful music elicits gifts of rice from the housewife.

Historical Ballads. Kaṭṭabomman, a historical figure, is hailed as the first chieftain in Tamilnadu who refused to accept the overlordship of the foreigners. He braves the fury of the English army for six years from 1792. Finally, he is forced to take refuge in Pudukkōṭṭai where a treacherous chief hands him over to the British. Kattabomman is chained and taken to Kayattāṛu where he is sentenced to

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death and hanged from a tamarind tree in the presence of a crowd of stooges. The hero puts the noose round his neck with his own hands, sacrificing his life at the altar of freedom. His story is sung in a variety of ballad forms. One of them employs more than a dozen folk-tunes, the highlight being the dirge.

The ballads on Dēsingurājan and Rāmappaiyan describe their chivalry on the battlefield and provide scope for the reconstruction of the history of Tamilnadu in the respective periods.

In all the four categories, each ballad begins with an invocation that is followed by the subject matter, and ends with a benediction:

Ālpōl taḷaittu
Aṟuhu pōl vērōḍi
Mūṅgilpōl suṟṟam
Musiyāmal vāḷn-diruppīr!

May your tribe increase,
Like the spreading branches of the banyan tree.
May you have deep roots in prosperity
Like the penetrating roots of *aruku* (the hariali grass).
And may your kith and kin stand by you
Like the thick bamboo clusters. (tr.)

Folk-plays

Folk-plays (*terukkūttu*) have three dimensions—music, story and acting—and include the characteristics of folk-songs and ballads. However, their contribution to folk literature is meagre. The reason is not far to seek.

Folk-plays are limited to a few groups, not many of them with a talent for composing. The songs are written either by the leader or instructor of the party or by well-known scholars such as Gopalakrishna Bharati, author of the famous *Nandanār Caritram* dealing with the aspirations of a so-called untouchable to dwell in the grace of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram. The poet has freely used folk-tunes to the immense joy of rural audiences and his book is a treasure house of supremely devotional and classic yet popular music.

To repeat a well-known fact, the folk theatre has no built-up stages and curtains. The characters enter the arena dancing and introduce themselves in set songs. There are two extra participants, the herald and the clown, who enjoy some scope for improvisation. Most of the humorous folk-songs in Tamil are, perhaps, the creation of the clown.

Folk-tales

Folk-tales are different from the other schools of oral literature in one significant aspect. Songs, ballads, plays, proverbs and riddles do not brook any substantial modification of their word content. In folk-tales, however, the narrator has the freedom to use his own vocabulary and style within the framework of the theme. It is also possible for him to borrow stories from areas and languages other than his own. Folk-tales, therefore, afford easy mobility and represent the collective imagination of the entire nation. In keeping with the convention, folk-tales in Tamilnadu may also be classified into four categories: myths, legends, fables and fairy stories.

Their functions are manifold. They educate and indicate the moral path. They induce laughter, amusement and harmless sarcasm. They explain customs and illustrate proverbs and riddles. Above all, they captivate listeners through fantasies and supernatural make-believe.

Efforts have been made as early as 1893 to collect and codify in print Tamil folk-tales. Natesa Sastri's (Naṭēśa Śāstri, 1859–1906) *Folklore of South India* (1893), presents in English a number of short stories then in vogue in the Tiruchirapalli region of Tamilnadu. He claims to have learnt them from his grandmother, even before he was ten. But the tribe of grandmothers, the custodians of oral folk-tales, has disappeared. Nevertheless, the spread of education, the growth of magazines and the emergence of broadcasting have, to a limited extent, filled the vacuum.

Of the old published works in Tamil, *Katā Cintāmaṇi* (Treasure House of Stories) and the tales of Madanakāmarājan are notable. *Katā Cintāmaṇi* includes stories of Mariyādai Rāman, Tenāli Rāman, King Appāji and about a hundred other stray tales. They are in folk dialect, but are interesting to read. The tales of Mariyadai Raman are treasured by rural folk. Tenali Raman and Appaji, though current for a long time, had probably their origins outside Tamilnadu.

Tales of Madanakamarajan demonstrate the ingenuity of a young man, the son of a minister, who gets involved in fake marriage ceremonies with two princesses, on behalf of his royal companion. The girls take him to be their real husband. However, he manages to divert their attention by telling them supernatural stories for twelve nights and finally unites them in wedlock with his companion, the prince.

Proverbs

Proverbs, described in *Tolkāppiyam* as *Muduśol*, have had unbroken sway through the ages, for they do not require a formal place and medium for transmission, but find expression in everyday speech.

Paḷamoḷi Nānūṟu (Proverbs Four Hundred, c. 5th century A.D.) is an ancient book, one of the 18 kilkkanakku poems, which is an example of the folk tradition influencing classical literature. All the 400 verses here end with a proverb. To quote a few examples:

The (aggressive) dog is here, but no stone (to scare it away).

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A tiger does not stoop to eat grass, even when it is (terribly) hungry.
A pot with water to the brim is never boisterous. (tr.)

There are a few other poetical works specially devoted to proverbs. Vedanayakam Pillai (1826–89) makes profuse use of proverbs in his *Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram* (The Story of Pratapa Mudaliyar, 1876), the first novel in Tamil.

Riddles

Riddles, *Pici* in Tamil, are, according to *Tolkāppiyam*, of two kinds, one implied, the other direct. They are statements with hidden meanings which have to be unravelled. Hence, they give food for thought and act as a touchstone to assess the knowledge of different peoples.

In olden times, foster-mothers kept their wards amused by posing riddles. But now riddles have widened their range and acquired a special place in the oral literature of Tamilnadu. They provide an extensive basis for stories, puns and frolic.

Ancient riddles were serious ones about the sun, moon, stars, sky, clouds, wind and other aspects of Nature. Men gazed wonderstruck at the vast sky and posed the riddle, 'A single wrapper for the entire world'. They watched the stars and coined the conundrum, 'I roasted the rice and kept it safe in a box, but alas, at dawn it is gone'. A Greek mythological puzzle posed the question, 'What has one voice and yet becomes four-footed, two-footed and three-footed?' and gave the answer as the crawling child, the walking adult and the tottering old man with a leaning staff. Similar is a Tamil riddle, 'Four feet early in the morning, two at midday and three at dusk'. Men see the lush vegetation all round and suggest that the jack fruit is 'the grinding stone hanging from the topmost branch of the tree' and the pumpkin is 'the cow that sleeps, while the rope grazes'.

To the ancients, Nature itself was a puzzle. But today science is all-pervasive, creating new wonders. It thus provides an unlimited scope for riddle-making. For example:

What is born in dazzling light and viewed in pitch darkness.
(Answer: cinema).
A little music at the tip of a needle.
(Answer: gramophone).
Give the command and he runs non-stop. But his course is unseen and his form invisible.
(Answer: radio).

And the radio itself through its programmes, has contributed to the phenomenal growth of riddles in Tamilnadu.

A special variety of riddles is known as *Iru Śol Alaṅkāram* (double phrases with a single meaning). It has a single answer for two or more questions. To cite an example:

Āl ilai paḷuppatēn,
Irā vaḷi naḍappadēn?

'Why do the banyan leaves turn purple. (tr.)
How is it that men dare travel during dark nights?'
Because: There is none to pluck (and plunder). (tr.)

And, finally, here is a riddle on the riddle itself.

What is it that was, that is, and that will be, with teasing knots at every turn?

A portion of this riddle is most apt when applied to Tamil folk literature as a whole. It is dynamic, with its roots thousands of fathoms deep in tradition.

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Telugu

B. RAMARAJU

The rich variety of folk literature in Telugu, with its distinctive literary and cultural values representing a spontaneous artistic expression of the Telugu people, is as old as the Telugu language and culture. Nannicoḍa (11th century) and Pālkuriki Sōmanātha (12th–13th centuries) refer in their poetical works, to the different kinds of folk-songs and art forms prevalent in those days. Folk literature can be broadly divided into three main branches, i.e. song, prose and drama. Songs may again be divided into two: (i) simple songs, and (ii) ballads, or narrative poems, long and short.

Folk-songs

The simple songs are generally known as folk-songs. These folk-songs can be grouped either on the basis of sentiment, as love-songs, humorous songs, songs of pathos, etc., or on the basis of subject matter, as philosophical songs, devotional songs, ritualistic songs, songs describing Nature or natural objects, etc., or on the basis of persons who sing them or for whom they are meant, as labourers' songs, women's songs and children's songs.

As in classical literature folk literature too abounds in amorous songs. The erotic sentiment is depicted according to the tastes of the singers. Though some of these love-songs deal with violations of the social code and with illegitimate attraction, pure love is also very skilfully portrayed in some of the songs. The following is a typical example of this. In it, a young woman pours forth her tale of woe:

Oh moon, Sweet moon:
He fell in love with me,
And pined away for me
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

He won me by his love
And, I fell in love with him,
The day was about to dawn
And I called him 'my Sweetheart'
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

He stared at me,
But did not answer;
He did not speak a word;
And, it was strange
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

He was doting on me,
He was clinging to me,
And, it was so, till yesterday
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

He showered many a smile on me
And many a rare present too.
Waited and waited for my favour
Till I fell in love with him.
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

His light pink dhoti smells of musk;
His young moustache fans out love;
His charming image is enthroned in my heart
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

He has a dagger by his side,
With emeralds studded on its handle
It is sharp and very sharp
Oh moon, Sweet moon....

I wish the dagger reaches my heart
And then, all will be rest and peace.
Oh moon, Sweet moon.... (tr.)

Wedding Songs. Folk-songs in Telugu, however, are better known for their humour. The best examples of satire, humour, repartee, parody, wit and caricature are found in Telugu folk-songs. *Gangā-Gaurī Samvādam*, *Īśwara-Bhṛingi Samvādam*, *Lakṣmi-Pārvati Samvādam*, *Varṣa pāṭalu* and other songs illustrate many types of humour. *Viyyālavāri Pāṭalu* (songs sung by the bride's and the bridegroom's parties) contain delicate (and sometimes even pungent and biting) humour, which Telugu women enjoy during the fun and frolic of weddings. But the fun turns to sorrow when it is time for the bride to leave; and the farewell songs are moving.

The familiarity of the Telugus with the Ramayana has produced several folk-songs based on mythology. The following is an example of a mythology-based farewell song: King Janaka affectionately calls Sita, his foster daughter, to his side and hands her over to her in-laws.

If your Lord is in a temper, never cross him,
Be alert to be always by his side,
If he is uxorious towards you, never be proud,

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Always be by his side.
Understand the mind of Śrīrāma,
Forget us all, and shed your attachment to us. (tr.)

He then places her hands in those of Queen Kausalya, Rama's mother, saying:

O, Lady, bid her to serve you,
And secure her services to you all.
If by chance, she goes to play,
Mildly admonish her, and with affection and tact get her to perform the duties.
From now on, she is your girl, no longer is she ours.
Bestow equal affection on Śānta
Your daughter and this Sita, now your own daughter. (tr.)

Sita follows her parents-in-law. But her mother is unable to bear the sight of her departure. She appeals to her to turn her face homewards for a farewell look:

O, Sita, just turn your face towards us.
Your looks will be to us like pearls and diamonds.
Let us see the undulating chaplet decorating
Your bridal forehead.

O, Sita, just turn your face towards us.
Let the disc of azure jades bestow on us their lustre.
O Sita, turn yourself towards us. (tr.)

Such farewell songs are many and people sing them at social gatherings. The words convey the manners and customs of the common people and not those of the epic characters. In this song Sita is made the prototype of all daughters going to their in-laws' houses after marriage.

Songs of Pathos. As misery overrides happiness in life folk-songs depicting pathos are not only numerous, but are also more moving. The grief of simple folk caused by natural calamity, the death of a loved one or the ill-treatment of a housewife or servant are all expressed in these melancholy songs. The following is an *Ētamu Pāṭa*, sung while water from wells or streams is diverted to the fields. The peasant works hard, day and night, and is responsible for the harvest, but his rewards are meagre. He feeds others, but often has to starve himself. The bosses from the town and the petty officers from the village harass him, but he cannot directly criticize them. So he sings allegorically and laments his fate:

I lift water from the stream
And produce thousands of bags of paddy,
But rarely do I have a morsel.
Having washed my feet and hands
When I sat on the bank, the crow hit me on the head,
And even the little ones of the crows hit me on the head.
Unequal to the fight, when I sat near the fire
My own daughter slighted me,
And this daughter's mother too slighted me.

Getting up before dawn,
When I set out with a bucket on my head,
I fell headlong on the ground
And my bones were broken.
Oh, what a wretched life do I lead,
Why did I not die early? (tr.)

Tattvālu (Philosophical Songs). The illiterate rustics sing and talk of great philosophical truths in songs called Tattvālu, those that tell truth. Even a cowherd sings *Gūṭa Cilukēdirā Cinnannā gūḍu cinaboyerā* (where has the bird gone, brother? The nest looks deserted). These songs mainly monistic and popular among non-Brahmins, very often ruthlessly criticize superfluous ritualistic codes and customs of the higher castes.

The songs of such blessed souls and mystics as Eganṭi Lakṣmayya (16th century), Potulūri Vīrabrahmam (17th century), Vemana (17th century), Dudekula Siddappa (17th century) Śeṣācala Swāmy, Bhoja Dasu and Edla Ramadasu are commonly heard all over Andhra. These songs generally preach Rajayoga, Achala Philosophy, Devotion towards the guru, rightmorals, social reforms, non-violence, detachment and good conduct, and denounce the caste system. The precepts laid down in the *Bhagavad Gita* are reiterated in simple words in some of these philosophical songs. These songs are often sandwiched between the episodic narrations of the heroic ballads.

Devotional Songs. Devotion being the easiest way for salvation, thousands of devotional folk-songs belonging to Saivism, Vaishnavism and other cults are popular in the Telugu country. *Jangams*, Haridāsas and other beggars also eke out their livelihood by singing these devotional songs. Songs of Bhadrācala Rāmadāsu (1620–80), Tūmu Narasimhadāsu, Parānkuśadāsu, Niṭṭāla Prakāśadāśu, Rakamacharla Venkatadasu and Tatankam Venkatadasuare the mainstay of wandering mendicants and minstrels. Besides these, *Saṅkīrtanas* (psalms), some of the *Mēlukolupulu* (awakening songs), *Lālipāṭalu* (caressing songs), *Jolapāṭalu* (Lullabies), *Kolāṭa Pāṭalu* (songs of the stick dance) and *Maṅgaḷahāratị* (sung while offering lighted lamp or camphor to the deity) may also be included among devotional songs. The *Kolāṭa Pāṭalu* include *Madhurabhakti* (devotion mixed with erotic love).

Children's Songs. Children's songs are of two types: (i) songs composed by elders for children, and (ii) songs composed by children themselves. Among the songs composed by elders, *Lālipāṭalu* and *Jolapāṭalu* are important.

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These are songs sung during feeding, while massaging babies' limbs before bathing, when children are being pacified or taught different movements. In these songs an attempt is made to teach children first, sound, then rhythm and, finally, gesture.

Among the songs sung by children are some which are entirely their own compositions while others are songs originally composed by elders but altered and adapted by children. Most of the play-songs of boys and girls are of this type. Chemmachekka, Bitti, Guḍuguḍuguñcam, Bujabujarēkulu, Gobbiḷḷu, Kotikommach, Chirragone, Dāgilimūtalu, Pillikuppalu are some of the children's games accompanied by songs.

Labourer's Songs. Songs not only soothe the heart and mind but also alleviate physical fatigue and inspire people to greater effort. But it should be noted that most labourer's songs are best suited to the particular kind of labour involved. Either the movements of their limbs or the inhalations and exhalations of their breath set the rhythms for these songs, which provide pleasure not only through the music but also through the sexual innuendo in many of them.

Women's Songs. Most popular are the songs of the women to whom singing is a part of their daily work. The Telugu woman sings either for pleasure or to lighten the burden of her humdrum routine, but she sings spontaneously. She also sings songs connected with the problems of motherhood or barrenness, she sings during the ceremonies connected with a girl's puberty or her wedding. Realism is more predominant than poetic imagery in these songs, and so the social history of the people is correctly presented.

Ballads

The ballads, whose length depends upon the story content, narrate a variety of stories from mythology, religion, epics, puranas, history, legends, fables and local events. Stories from the Vedas, the Ramayana and Mahabharata and from the *Kathāsaritsāgara* and the Puranas form a large core of these folk-songs, because the villagers are devoted to mythology. However, many changes and innovations have crept into these stories according to the fancies, tastes and temperaments of the villagers. Often the incidents are given a topical turn by bringing in contemporary events. The manners and customs of traditional Telugu society are also interwoven with the story. And some of the characters neglected by classical authors are re-created afresh by the folk composers. This process of transformation demands originality and gives ancient works a local touch. For instance, in the story of the Ramayana, Lakshmana's wife Urmila is only mentioned at the time of her marriage. But the folk composer has developed an elaborate story about her. The theme of her deep slumber is raised to a sublime height and, in an artistic finale, she regains her lo after his exile. Her chastity gains the sympathies of the listeners. The heroine Sita, too, is treated as a daughte of the Telugu land. Such ballads cater to the simple tas of the country folk, but at the same time retain the digni of the epics.

A sense of wonder about the mysteries and inexplicab occurrences of Nature is a significant element in the l of the common people. To aspire for the impossible human; to realize it, the villagers seek supernatural he Based on this human aspiration, many wonderful stori have come into existence. Among them, the most popu one throughout Andhra is the story of *Bālanāgamma*. It a local Ramayana, wherein the heroine Balanagamma abducted by the evil Māyala Pakīru, who wields sup human powers with the help of his magic wand. Anoti popular story is *Kammāvari Paṇati Pasala Bālarāju Kat* which is about an inter-caste marriage. The oldest and t finest story of this type is that of Gandhari. Other stori such as *Dharmāngada Pāmu Pāṭa*, *Kāmbhojarāju Katha* a *Bālarāju Katha* infuse fear and reverence in the hearts the people and proclaim that only truth and righteousn will ultimately triumph.

Like the sense of wonder, the sentiment of pathos is a ingrained in the people. Once again, since the subjects these stories are drawn from everyday life, they beco telling evidence of the rural social ethos. For instan women who have suffered at the hands of their mothers- law or their cruel husbands, or who have succumbed to plots of malignant co-wives or fellow daughters-in-law, who have played into the hands of mischievous neighbo or who are otherwise destined to be doomed, are subje of folk ballads which fascinate village folk. The Telu have added charm to many a tragic story that actu happened. *Kanyakāmmavāri Katha*, *Kāmamma Ka Lakṣmamma Katha*, *Sanyāsamma Katha*, *Maṇḍap Pāpamma Katha*, *Erukala Nañcari Katha*, *Tirupata Katha*, *Vīra Rājamma Katha*, *Erukamma Katha*, *Rāmula Katha Sarojini Katha* and *Nalla Taṅgāḷ Katha* (a story Tamilnadu) are stories that depict the fateful lives women who were persecuted or killed or sacrificed. Am such stories are the *Pēraṇṭāṇḍla Kathālu*, stories of faith wives who died on the pyres of their husbands.

Historical Ballads. Historical ballads, also known heroic ballads, describing the noble lives of ancient heroes, their deeds of valour and their pastimes are d narrated by the folk composer. Audiences are al enthralled by these recitals. These ballads differ from o types of narrative songs in content, style and metho narration. Their purpose is to stimulate and amplify sentiment of heroism and patriotism. *Palanāṭi* *Kathālu* and *Kāṭamarāju Kathālu* are ballad cycles.

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include many connected stories. They date back to the 12th century and the hero worship connected with them is annually celebrated in the Guntur and Nellore districts respectively, even today. The story of Kumara Rama (14th century), the prince of Kampili, who fought a heroic battle against Mohammed bin Tughlak, is common to both Andhra and Karnataka. Likewise, the ballad of Desinguraju is common to both Andhra and Tamil Nadu. The ballads of Savai Venkata Reddi (17th century), Miyan Sahib, Somanadri, Rameswara Rao (1826–72), Rani Sankaramma, Karnul Nawab, Sadasiva Reddi, Parwatāla Malla Reḍḍi, Sarvai Pāpaḍu (all 18th century), Balguri Kondalrayudu and Are Marathilakatha are very popular in the Telangana region. *Bobbili katha*, describing the battle of Bobbili (1757), is well-known throughout Andhra. *Bangāru Timmarāju katha* is popular in Rayalasima as are *Peddāpuram Koḍipuñjula katha* (18th century) and *Padmanābha Yuddham katha* (1794) in coastal Andhra. The ballad describing the heroic exploits of Allūri Sitārāma Rāju (1897–1924), who fought against the British during the struggle for Independence, though of recent origin, is also popular throughout Andhra.

Prose Literature

The second branch of folk literature, prose, can be divided into (i) prose narrative (ii) proverbs, and (iii) riddles. Prose narrative is again divided into mythological, legendary and simple folk-tales, with subdivisions such as popular tales, fairy-tales, marchen, and saga.

Prose Narrative. Like Telugu folk poetry, Telugu prose narrative also goes back to the days when disappointed Guṇāḍhya narrated his *Kathāsaritsāgara* (Ocean of Stories) to the animals in the forest during the Andhra Satavahana period. Since then all types of prose narratives—those with celestials, those with animals, birds and reptiles as characters, those dealing with human beings and those with all these as characters—are told and retold by grandmothers and grandfathers during their leisure hours. These folk-tales, through fantasy and make-believe, satisfy the rustic's curiosity about the inexplicable phenomena of man and Nature.

Stories from ancient anthologies such as the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, *Pañcatantra*, *Śuka Saptati*, *Hamsavimśati*, stories of such legendary kings as Vikramaditya and Salivahana (an Andhra who is responsible for Salivahana Saka), stories of Bhoja and Kalidasa, stories of great ministers and generals who ruled over this part of the country, stories of Buddhists, Saivite and Vaishnavite saints and devotees, and stories of sacred places, hills, temples and rivers are the treasures handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth. But folk-tales, though in abundance in the oral tradition, are fewer in written form or printed anthologies, than folk-songs. Though some prose narrative is common to other regions and languages, it retains the local character and culture-complex of the Telugu region and society and depicts the customs, beliefs, habits and superstititons of Andhra.

Proverbs

There is in Telugu a rich treasure of proverbs, some dealing with domestic life, others with professions such as agriculture, trade and commerce, cottage industries, etc. There are didactic proverbs and those used in common parlance; proverbs derived from mythology, the epics and historic local events; and there are obscene and vulgar proverbs. The Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi, private publishers and individual scholars have published anthologies of proverbs (*Telugu Sāmetalu*—A. P. Sahitya Akademi, 1959, *Rayalasima Palukubadulu*—V. Venkatappayya, 1979). Half a dozen M. Phil. and Ph. D. dissertations on Telugu proverbs are also available. Telugu proverbs, like the proverbs of other languages, represent the Telugu genius more than any other form in literature as they are the result of long experience and observation of the human mind and nature. Their literary flavour is enhanced by figures of speech, alliteration and a crispness of language. These proverbs reveal some of these characteristics.

1. Crops in off season and children in old age.
2. One who does not remove the weeds, need not harvest also.
3. The family name is musk, but the family smells filthy.
4. Even if the horse were blind, it does not eat any the less.
5. A beggar husband is better than ruler son.
6. It does not matter if the birth is premature, provided the child is male.
7. Even while throwing away, you count the throw.
8. How could a barren woman know labour pains?
9. Don't care for relatives and don't disregard friends.

Riddles

Providing pleasure and knowledge while testing a person's ability are witty and confusing riddles that sharpen the intellect and provoke thought. Rural folk during their leisure hours often form groups who compete against each other, one group posing the riddles, the other trying to answer them, and then changing sides. More often it is a pastime of the children who learn the riddles from their elders.

Riddles are known in Telugu as *Poḍupulu*. They are also called *Taḷlu* and *Śāstrālu*. *Poḍupu katha* (riddle tale) is common nomenclature because of the stories embedded in the riddles. Telugu classical literature has inherited riddles

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in abundance from Sanskrit. While riddles in verse form part of *Citra kavita* in classical literature, riddles in prose and song form part of folk literature in Telugu.

The following are a few popular Telugu riddles:

1. A tailless bird travels a hundred miles. (A letter).
2. My grandfather has brought two bulls;
   While one is constant, the other rotates. (Grindstone).
3. The tank in Hanumakonda has five pillars in it. you can shake them, but not uproot them. (The palm and the fingers).
4. Press at the end and lick at the mouth. (A mango fruit).
5. Doors that constantly slam, but do not make a sound. (Eyelids).
6. The tiny fellow has dresses innumerable. (An onion).
7. The bull bellows in the forest. (An axe).
8. A mouthless bird drinks water with its tail. (A wick).
9. You may not want any stone; but you want that stone. (Salt-stone).
10. Eyes all over the body, but no Indra;
    It cannot move without the aid of man;
    It has no life of its own, but kills many.
    (The fishing-net).

Folk-drama

Performing art forms such as *Yakṣagāna*, *Pagaṭi Vēṣālu*, *Kalāpam*, *Kuravañji*, *Vithinātakam*, *Bommalāṭa* or Puppetry, *Vālakam*, *Buṛṛa katha*, *Hari katha* and *Bahurūpa* comprise folk drama.

Yakṣagāna. The name *Yakṣagāna* suggests that it was once a recitation of *deśi* music by a Yaksha or Yakshini, which later evolved as a narration of episodes involving more than one character, and which finally developed into an opera with different kinds of songs, dialogue and numerous characters. In Andhra, the Yakshas known as Jakkulu are a caste devoted to dance and theatre. The early *Yakṣagānas* contain *deśi* compositions besides dialogues. Later *Yakṣagānas* developed many nuances and adopted some of the features of classical Sanskrit drama. The Tanjore Naik period was the golden age of the *Yakṣagāna* in composition as well as production. The earliest reference to *Yakṣagāna* in classical Telugu literature goes back to the 11th century but two extant *Yakṣagānas*, *Vipranārāyaṇa Carita* and *Sugriva Vijayamu* are dated 1545 and 1568 respectively.

Yakṣagāna may be described as an operatic ballet interspersed with songs of varying rhythms, to effectively convey the moods of the episodic situation. The subjects chosen are mostly from puranic lore, but with an eye to popular appeal. The structure of the playlet is always simple. It opens, develops, reaches a climax and the denouement is worked out. Occasionally a local incident is woven into the dialogue. The earlier *Yakṣagāna* themes centred on the gods, but since the Tanjore Naik period successful attempts have been made to write plays on contemporary subjects as well. More than 500 *Yakṣagānas* are available in print and an equal number or more are yet to see the light of day.

Some of the stock characters introduced in *Yakṣagānas* to portray local incidents, have gained individuality. They are often portrayed as part of a separate one-man or two-man performance called *Pagaṭi Vēṣālu*, which means 'day characters' (the name derives from the fact that the performances are enacted during daytime). The actors, often not more than two or three, go from village to village portraying one role (Vesham) each day of the week, and then, on the final day, seek alms. Some of the important characters in *Pagaṭi Vēṣālu* are Dādinamma, Somayāji, Somidevamma and Koravanji.

Kalāpam. *Kalāpam*, another type of traditional drama, is a precursor of *Yakṣagāna*. It is simpler in its thematic development and more direct in its moral appeal. It is a monoplay, usually characterizing one main person and another less important. Each of the characters enters with a self-introduction. The *Sūtradhāra* not only conducts the play, giving a running commentary on the sequence, but often plays the role of an attendant whose main duty is to respond, question and fill in the dramatic gaps. The stress is on Sāttvikābhinaya (gestures of finer sentiments and emotions and the *rasa* is either *sṛngāra* or *Bhakti*). The most important dramas of this type are *Bhāmākalāpam* and *Gollakalāpam*, said to have been composed by Siddhendra Yogi in the 14th century. In order to rescue the dance from prostitute dancers, he initiated and trained a whole clan of Brahmin boys in the art. *Bhāmākalāpam* is the story of Satyabhama who finds the absence of Lord Krishna unbearable and anxiously awaits His coming. This dance-drama has gained considerable popularity and attained classical heights due to the elaborate nuances introduced to it by the *Kuccipuḍi* masters. *Gollakalāpam*, on the other hand, is a philosophical play in which a milkmaid explains to a Brahmin the philosophy behind God's persistent reappearances on Earth whenever there is a decline of Dharma. The *Kuccipuḍi* troupes perform these dance-dramas, and many others, in a superb manner which has earned them a world-wide reputation.

Kuravañji. *Kuravañji* is a metaphysical operatic playlet in which *Jīva Sati* represents *Jīvātma* and *Kriya Kāṇḍa* represents the actions indulged in by creatures. *Siṅgi* represents Primeval Nature, *Kuravañji* the Gnostic Enlightenment and *Singi* (gypsy) the Original Kinetic Energy of the Cosmos. The fundamental tenets of religion are delightfully expounded through this dramatic medium

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Kuravañji also refers to the female soothsayer. Her cry 'Eruka' can be translated as 'awareness'. A traditional song is recited as an invocation to the gods and goddesses. Then obeisance is offered to the Master. Now commences the soothsaying, spoken in riddles and cryptic epigrams. The soothsayer is particularly introduced in romantic plots to foretell coming events to the pining lover. *Kurvañji* has its counterpart, *Kurattippāṭṭu*, or *Korattiyāṭṭam*, in Tamil and Malayalam. *Rājamohana Kuravañji* and *Koravañji Katle* date to the 17th century.

Vīthināṭakam. *Vīthināṭakam* is an open-air drama performance different from its namesake '*Vīthi*', one of the ten types of Sanskrit plays. This type of play, introduced by the Saivites with missionary zeal, once drew its subject matter from the epics. But now it also covers more mundane, contemporary subjects. This form of open-air theatre also produces *Yakṣāganas*. History records these performances from the 15th century onwards. The Vijayanagara emperors patronized this art, which is still the most popular theatre art in Andhra Pradesh.

Vālakam. *Vālakam* is a play, the text of which is delivered impromptu. Four seasoned actors gather on the stage. On the spur of the moment they think of a topic and talk about it extemporaneously, but with dramatic gestures. The subject is usually topical; incidents of everyday life treated with a light touch and a sense of humour, for instance. Social evils are grotesquely satirized and individual idosyncrasies are caricatured to the merriment of the audience. The village officer, tax collectors, the dandy and the miser are frequent targets. The speeches are spicy and the ridicule is pungent. This type of folk-play is in vogue in the northern coastal districts of Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam.

Bahurūpa. *Bahurūpa* is a play wherein one actor who is adept at acting, singing and speech, takes the role of many and entertains the audience. Writers of dance texts classify *Bahurūpa* as a folk variety, mention of which has been made so far back as the 13th century.

It is interesting to note that only male actors play the roles of males and females in all the above-mentioned types of plays. Only in puppet shows do female artistes sing the songs for female roles, but even then from behind the white curtain.

Puppetry is one of the most ancient Indian folk arts and Andhra history records that this art was in vogue even during the Satavahana period, 150 B.C. to A.D. 200. Art critics are of the view that puppetry spread from Andhra to Indonesia, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, Burma and from there to Africa, Greece, Macedonia and the Byzantine empire. There are four kinds of puppetry: (i) marionettes or string puppets made of wood and manipulated by strings behind a curtain; (ii) Toḍugu Bommalu, or glove-puppets; the palm is thrust into the hollow of the figures and the fingers manipulate the movements; (iii) Ūca Bommalu or rod puppets, wherein the whole figure is mounted on a rod and strings passed through; and (iv) Tōlu Bommalu, or coloured leather puppets of the shadow play. This art, like all other folk art in general, is slowly vanishing and only the fourth type survives with any vigour. The stories enacted by the puppeteers are mostly taken from the epics and puranas.

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Urdu

MOHAMMAD HASAN

The literary flowering of Urdu, unlike most other Indian languages, does not go farther than the 13th century when the intermingling of various regional and Turko-Iranian influences gave birth to a literary style later named Urdu. Hence, folk literature in Urdu is neither so copious nor so ancient as in the other languages. Due to its association with the urban environment, folk literature in Urdu could not find due recognition and appreciation. Even the genesis and climate of growth substantially differ from their counterparts in other sister languages.

The Background

Urdu literature developed in the bazaar, the monastery and the *salons*—and all these places had their own characteristic features. For instance, the bazaar has its vendors selling their merchandise through street songs. It has also its gossip centres in various corners—including the glamour houses of the 'nautch' girls. Then the adjoining houses of the mohallas of the interior had their own cultural ethos. Every house was practically divided into two parts—one for the menfolk to entertain themselves with indoor games like chess, or with a session of gossip, poetry or other pastimes while the other apartment was reserved for the ladies—who lived in 'purdah' but their life inside this seclusion was not so barren, as is usually conceived. Every week there was one ceremony or the other, which provided a pretext for singing and merry-making. From birth to death, there was a long series of ceremonies providing all the relations and the neighbours opportunities to meet and participate in each others' joys and sorrows. This participation gave birth to many folk-songs, some of which were composed spontaneously. (See Mrs. Meer Hasan Ali, *Observations on the Mussalmans of India*, London, 1832).

In fact, there developed several classes of singers, dancers, and entertainers—both male and female—who specialized in singing folk-songs on such occasions—often called *mirasi* (female—*mirasan*) *bhand*, etc. The latter sometimes enacted short readily improvised plays particularly on the occasion of marriages with topical references.

Then, there were religious or semi-religious gatherings and rituals which provided occasion for these folk-songs. For instance, *marthiyas* and *nauhās* are the various forms of elegies written to mourn the death of Prophet Mohammad's grandson, Imam Hussain and the various members of his family and his 72 companions martyred in Karbala (in modern Iraq) at the hands of a tyrant debaucher King Yazid in the 8th century. Though literary masters have written beautiful elegies, womenfolk and the common people from various walks of life composed their own elegies and recited them in unison with others to mourn the martyrdom.

The bazaar also provided the venue for listening to long tales told by expert narrators to a crowd of interested listeners assembled at the crossroads. These tales were mostly in prose composed on the spur of the moment and narrated with an element of acting with a generous blending of poetry. These *dāstāns*—as they were called—were full of supernatural elements with plenty of scope for manoeuvres.

From the bazaar, folk literature proceeded to the monasteries, which were at that time centres of learning and culture combining in them the hospital, the school and provided the meeting point of the rich and the poor. The monasteries held *qawwālīs* (group singing) practically every week which were an amalgam of folk-song with music and attracted a large crowd. Again, most of the mystics were themselves poets and in order to popularize their ideas either composed them in forms and genres popular with the common people or got these composed by their admirers. They tried to explain and express their metaphysical ideas in the common idiom of the layman and the village woman. For instance, the working woman used to grind her corn in a grinder made of stone and every morning while grinding, she used to sing some song in her own tune. Sufis composed songs with imagery and symbols in tunes which were the favourites of these village women.

The third important source of these folk-songs was the *salon* institution. Though not comparable with the French *salon*, the drawing room of every noble was a centre of cultural attraction. The main preoccupation was music and literature, combinations of which created many folk-songs. It was here that many interesting specimens of folk literature were born and preserved. Proverbs, aphorisms, popular stories, ballads and other such kinds of folk literature were fostered here.

Folk-songs

Earliest folk-songs in Urdu are attributed to Amir Khusro (1255–1324) or his times:

Ammā mere bāwā ko bhejo jī ke sāvan āya
Beṭi, tera bāwa to burha rī ke sāvan aya
Ammā, mere bhaiyya ko bhejo jī ke sāvan aya
Beṭi, tera bhaiyya to bālā rī ke sāvan aya

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The couplets, express the feelings of a bride far away from her parents' home waiting for someone from her father's house to come to her husband's place to take her home on the eve of the spring festival.

The girl asks her mother to send father to take her home. The mother says that he is much too old. Then the girl asks her to send her brother to take her home. Mother says that her brother is much too young.

Ceremonial Songs. Urdu folk literature is intimately connected with innumerable ceremonies from birth to death. For instance, female singers invariably sing '*Āj paida hue Nandlāl*' (Today Nand Lal is born) in every Hindu or Muslim household on the birth of a child. Various folk-plays (*Naql*, a short piece of dialogue with mimicry) are enacted on this occasion depicting the pangs of childbirth.

The same type of songs are sung and *naqls* are enacted after six days of a child's birth. Another occasion is provided by marriage when various songs highlighting the rivalry between the bride and her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law are sung and folk-plays on these themes are presented.

Marriage Songs. Marriage is a major social event and right from the moment a proposal of marriage is sent to several weeks after the function, certain ceremonies with their special songs continue. To list a few of them:

When *Samdhans* (women from bridegroom's family) arrive for the wedding along with the marriage party, the female singers, *mirasans* (female singers and entertainers), sing songs containing 'abusive' references to the bridegroom's mother, sisters, aunts and others. These abuses are taken in their stride.

When the bridegroom sees the face of his bride for the first time in a ceremony called *Jalva*, in which the heads of both the bride and bridegroom are canopied by a single richly embroidered sheet of cloth, the *mirasans* again sing several songs asking the bride not to raise the veil and show her face to the bridegroom until he pledges to remain her slave all his life.

A special 'abusive' set of songs sung on this occasion is called *Tona*.

On the occasion of *Chauthi*, fourth day after marriage, when the bride and bridegroom and their close relations throw vegetables over one another, another set of songs are sung by the *mirasans*.

Nursery Songs

Chandā Māma dūr ke
Baṛe pakāen Būr ke
Āp khāen thāli men
Hamko den pyālī men
Pyāli gaī ṭūṭ
Chandā māmun gaye rūth
Pylāi āyī aur
Chandā māmun āye dāur.

My maternal uncle, the far-away, moon prepared pan-cakes with sugar. He helped himself to a dish full of pan cakes and gave us a few in a small cup. The cup got broken and the moon got angry. Came another cup and the moon-uncle came running. (tr.)

Akkaṛ bakkaṛ bambay bo
Assi navve pūre sau
Sau men lāga tāga
Chor nikal ke bhāga

This nonsense nursery rhyme is part of a sport in which a boy is declared a thief and he is expected to catch others in hiding.

These nursery rhymes are part of children's games and are popular everywhere. These throw light on family relationships and the occurrences of daily life.

Seasonal Songs. Urdu has a long tradition of *Bāramāsa* songs which describe the joys of the various seasons of the year on behalf of a housewife whose husband is employed in a far-off town. The lady implores him to come back home to celebrate the joy of the season concerned and thus describes the splendour of Nature with the pangs of her own heart.

Another popular form of folk-songs are those sung by young maidens swinging in the gardens in the rainy season. These *Jhūla* (swing) songs often depict the feelings of the maiden towards her fiance.

A famous song whose authorship is attributed to poet Muztar Khairabadi (Muḍtar) is as follows:

Chha rahi kāli ghaṭa jiya ra mura lahrāi hai

Dark rain-clouds are spread over the sky.
New waves stir my heart. (tr.)

Amba par kyon jam raha main bhi sarāpa zard hōn
Farq itnā had ke us men ras hai mujhmen hāye hai

Why are you so absorbed in the mangoes. What is there in them. I am as pale as the mango with the only difference that the mango is full of juice and I am full of pain and plaint. (tr.)

Another set of semi-religious and semi-ritualistic songs is the *Rātjāga* (night festivity and collective singing by women) songs. Usually after the fulfilment of a long-cherished desire or some good news, the ladies of the family gather together, stay awake all night and sing songs, With the dawn, they sing a song suited to the occasion and send sweet rice pudding called *Rahm* to the adjoining mosque to be distributed among those assembled for morning prayers. The first line of the song is:

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Āṅgan mere ājā Allāh miyān re
Oh God come to my courtyard. (tr.)

Religious Songs. There are several groups of entertainers—some of these still active—who sing songs pertaining to their occupation, or connected with religious, semi-religious, cultural and social ceremonies. For instance, in the fasting month of *Ramdhān* every year, parties of two or three singers take a round of the mohallas in the small hours of the morning to awaken people so that they may eat something before sunrise when the fast begins. They sing devotional songs.

Similarly every year in the month of Muharram, the mourning month commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet's grandson and his family members, assemblies are held where *Ṣahādat Nāmās*—prose narration of the martyrdom with some poetry pieces thrown in between—are read. These are mostly anonymous and are parts of folk tradition. Similarly, *Mīlād Nāmās*—narratives of the Prophet's birth and his main achievements—are recited in public with some poetry pieces thrown in between.

In this category fall various songs used in *Qawwalis* and *Chār Bait* performances. *Qawwali* is a form of singing usually of mystic songs and *ghazals* with instrumental accompaniment with a number of singers participating in the chorus. In *Qawwalis* held on the tombs of eminent *sūfis* commemorating their birth or death anniversaries, a regular feature is the singing of the *rang*, which comprises a song expressing mystic joy from the lips of a woman playing *holi* with her beloved. Though vouched in romantic vein, it expresses mystic thoughts through various symbols drawn from everyday family life. These songs are usually attributed to Amir Khusrau.

Chār Baits, also a sort of community singing, combines singing and dancing by male participants and usually consists of two couplets and a refrain sung to the accompaniment of a typical Afghan instrument, *daf*. Songs are devotional, mystical and romantic with a veneer of ethics.

Laoni. A very important part of the folk poetry in Urdu is known by the name of *Laoni*, which according to a contemporary author, Azhar Ali Faruqi, (in his book *Uttar Pradesh ke Lok Git* [Folk-songs of Uttar Pradesh], 1982) originated in the 18th century in the days of Muhammad Shah, Emperor of Delhi. Based on a certain form of *Khayāl* style of music, it soon developed into folk poetry written and sung by untrained middle-class singers. Various *akhāṛās* (group singing based on episodes) were organized, particularly on the eve of Basant Ritu and competitions held between various groups. Each group would commence singing with *sakhi daur* (which praises of the deity or God); then the *Nām Gaon*, the portion introducing the group and its masters, to be followed by couplets with mystical, ethical or romantic themes. For instance:

My eyes are fixed (on someone) yet there is no sleep for me. I lie covering my face as if sleeping, but I lie weeping silently. In love, sometimes you do not get a wink of sleep and sometime lie in deep slumber. Lovers are like this—sometime they laugh, at other moments they weep. (tr.)

Folk-tales

Ṣikār Nāmā (Hunter's Tale). Among the important folk forms in Urdu are the *Ṣikār Nāmā* and the traditional children's tales. *Ṣikār Nāmā* is a prose tale usually composed by mystics as nonsensical episode denoting deeper mystical meaning. An example is given below from a tale usually ascribed to the 15th century probably written in Gulbarga (Karnataka).

We were brothers, three were without any clothes, and the fourth one was naked. The one who was naked, had the money in his sleeve. All four of us went to purchase bow and arrow from the market. Death came to us and all four died. Twenty-four stood up alive. Then four bows were sighted—three were broken and incomplete, and one without the essential parts. The naked brother who had the money purchased the bow without the essential parts. Now he thought of arrows. Four arrows were sighted—three were broken and the fourth was without essential parts. (tr.)

The story continues in the same strain. These brothers go hunting, see four deer—three dead and the fourth lifeless. They shoot the lifeless one....Needless to say that this nonsense story bears deep mystical overtones.

Chirya Chure ke Kahani (The Story of the Birds). Another popular genre is tales composed for children usually by grandmothers. In these tender innocent tales usually figure birds and animals and they portray situations enjoyable to children. One of the most popular children's tale is given here as a specimen.

Once there was a bird and her husband. The bird brought a food grain. Her husband brought a grain of rice. Both cooked *khichri*. The he-bird went to fetch water. In the meantime, the bird ate all the food and made the pot and the spoon dirty. When he came back and enquired about the food, the bird complained of headache and pain in her eyes. The he-bird, thereupon, went to seek justice. It was decided that both would take a chance on the swing set in a deep well. Both were then tested, and the liar was drowned. (tr.)

Chakki Nāmā (Grinder's Song). Songs bearing mystical overtones have been composed by women grinding corn in the morning. These songs were set in a typical tune and

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contain references to anecdotes of their everyday life. Later on, mystics composed songs with mystical connotation in the same tune.

Dāstāns (Prose Tales). The most important prose genre of Urdu folk literature is *Dāstān*, narrated extempore before an attentive audience every night. These *Dāstāns* have not been preserved barring a few in the 19th century, which are available in print. But the usual pattern of all these *Dāstāns* remains the same—a battle against all powerful forces of Evil aided by the black powers of magic waged by a group of honest men of Faith assisted by God and a lively character—Omar Ayyar—of jovial temperament adept at changing his appearance. One tale is dovetailed into another, yet retains the thread of continuity and suspense.

Folk-plays (Bhāṇḍs)

Bhāṇḍs are groups of entertainers who used to perform improvised plays on ceremonious occasions. Abdul Halim Sharar (1860–1926) in his book *Guzaṣṭa Lucknow* (Lucknow of the Past) narrates several anecdotes, one of which is given as under:

A certain very miserly nawab in Lucknow gave an old shawl to the *Bhāṇḍs*, who gratefully accepted it. Soon after they staged a play showing Almighty God asking them to read what was written on the shawl implying thereby that the shawl was worm-eaten. One of the actors, began to read the names of ancient prophets beginning from Adam and ending with Jesus Christ. The other one enquired why he was not reading the name of Prophet Mohammad. The reply was that the shawl belonged to an age when the holy prophet was yet to be born.

Aphorisms, Riddles (Paheli), and Jumbles (Anmils)

Bison ka sar kat liya
Na mara na khūn kiya.

This is an example of self-explanatory enigma. Literally translated, it means 'Cut the head of scores, yet neither hit nor kill anyone.' The solution is: Nail (*nākhūn* is the word for nails and forms the part of the riddle; *nā* means 'no' *khūn* means 'blood)'. You cut twenty nails, yet you neither hurt anyone nor kill anybody.

Ek thāl motiyon se bhara
Sab ke sar par ulta dhara
Chāron aur wo thāl phire
Moti us se ek na gire

There is a large dish full of pearls, placed upside down upon the heads of all of us. It revolves all the time in every direction, yet not a single pearl drops down. (Solution: starry sky) (tr.)

Another special type of folk literature genre is *Anmil* —a statement made of wholly incongruous words. For instance, four persons suggest four words without any link whatsoever and then the poet versifies all these words and creates some sort of link between them. For instance,

Kutta (dog)
Khīr (pudding)
Charkha (spinning wheel)
Dhol (drum)

are four wholly unconnected words suggested by four different maidens. Poet Amir Khusrau combined them in one couplet:

Khīr pakāī jatan se aur charkha diya jala
Āya kutta khā gaya to beṭhi dhol baja

Baked the pudding by burning the wood of the spinning wheel. A dog came and ate up the pudding. Now you have nothing to do, but beat the drum. (tr.)

Other Categories

Reference must be made to the two main sources of folk tradition which have been the fountainhead of the entire idiom of literary works. The first was of Turko-Persian symbolism widely accepted as the symbol vocabulary of all mystic poetry and casting the entire ghazal-writing in its mould. Nobody ever prescribed that the word 'wine' will denote love or the word *gul* (flower, or rose) the face of the beloved, or the caravanserai, the desert and hills, but it was due to the force of the folk tradition that these symbols assumed particular meaning, suggestive of various shades and dimensions.

The second source is the tale which contains specific Indian elements reminiscent of Hindu mythology and form the basis of innumerable literary writings such as '*mathnavi*', *Sahr-ul-Bayān* (1781), *Gulzār-i-Nasīm* (by Daya Shankar Nasim, 1811–43) and Amanat's *Inder Sabha* (1846) and Madāri Lāl's play of the same title.

The tale depicts the love of a beautiful fairy for a young prince. She abducts him to her abode and lands herself in trouble due to the insistence of the prince to attend the dance performance held in the court of the King of the Fairyland, Raja Inder. The presence of the human visitor is detected and he is promptly punished with detention in a deep well and finally pardoned due to the contrivance of the fairy or her intelligent friend, who dresses herself as a mendicant woman and dances in the royal court and achieves the release of the prince.

This short survey does not include the innumerable songs and tales compiled by anonymous and known writers

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which have been a part of the cultural and literary ethos of the Urdu world. Prayers like:

Tujhe fazl karte nahīn lagti bār
Na ho tujh se māyūs ummēdwār.

You need no time to extend your grace and blessing to your creation. None should despair of your kindness. (tr.)

Teri zat hai akbari sarvari
Meri bār kyon der itni kari.

You are the greatest and the most majestic, O God, why do you brook so much delay in extending your kindness to me. (tr.)

Folk-songs, prose tales and other pieces also reflect the various topical and political happenings. For instance, folk-songs and tales about the 1857 revolt of Indian Independence were composed and remained popular for quite a long period. Similarly the Khilāfat Movement gave birth to songs like

Ammā bolin Muhammad Ali kī
Jān beta Khilāfat pe dedo.

Muhammad Ali's mother asked him to sacrifice his life for the Khilāfat movement. (tr.)

Even a brief survey of folk literature reveals that folk tradition provides the bedrock of the literary tradition in Urdu, though proper importance has not been given to its study and analysis.

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Section 3

TRADITIONAL POETRY

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Introduction

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Recent historians of Indian culture have often derided the contribution of medieval India; not infrequently, the period 10th–18th century has been equated to the medieval dark ages of Europe. In comparison to the glories of ancient India and the achievements of Sanskrit literature and Gupta art, this is considered the period of superstition and decadence, which saw a withering away of the creative energies of a people who were torn with ceaseless military strife.

Fortunately, during the last three decades some balance has been restored in the critical writing of Indian history in general and of the Indian arts in particular. Vasudev Saran Agrawala and Rai Krishnadasa were amongst the first of the Indian writers who drew attention to the rich fabric of medieval Indian art, literature and painting. Others followed, in Southern India and Eastern India. The historio-political background of the Indian arts is important to remember because it underpins the achievements of the vast number of creative artists, writers, painters, musicians and dancers who were sometimes sustained by political power and at other times outside the pale of political or religious centres. They created great works despite the lack of patronage; often their creative effort was a voice of dissent or an assertion of a national identity and at all times, barring a few exceptions, their life and work had a deep impact with a popular appeal that transcended the barriers of caste, creed, regional parochialism and narrow sectarian interests. This attitude is nowhere more evident than in the field of creative writing particularly the traditional poetry of Indian languages.

Although Tamil and Kannada as languages have great antiquity, particularly the former, the emergence of Indian languages coincides roughly with the establishment of strong regional empires and the developments in Indian architecture particularly temple architecture. By the 10th – 11th centuries major temples had been built in all parts of India ranging from Narannag in Kashmir, Khajuraho in Central India to Brahadesvara in the South, Bhuvanesvara in the East to Patan in the West. By the 13th century, temple cities almost like major forts provided landmarks of the Indian landscape. These included Hampi, Halebid and Belur, Mt. Abu and Dilwara, Chidambaram and Jagannath Puri, to name only a few.

Sanskrit—A Great Link Language

Sanskrit as a language of the priestly class, and as a language of knowledge in diverse disciplines continued to flourish and there was feverish activity throughout India on the older texts. Many major commentaries on Vedic and classical Sanskrit literature were written during the period. The great names of Abhinava Gupta, Damodaragupta, Kshemendra, Rajsekhara, Bhoja, Sarangadeva and a host of others belong to this period which for facility one may call the early medieval period. Alongside was the

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composition of the *mahākāvyas*: chief amongst them being the *Naiṣadhacarita*, *Srikaṇḍhacarita* and *Gīta-Govinda*.

Concurrent was the sure and gradual growth of the various Apabhramsa forms. However, it is well to remember that the origin of regional variations of languages can be traced back much further in time. The first major writer of aesthetics, namely, Bharata, takes note of these variations in a text which can be dated to the 2nd–3rd century A.D., if not earlier. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, whether in the context of speech (*vācika*), or the enacting techniques (*āṅgika*) or the costume and decor (*āhārya*), the principle of regional variations is accepted. The concept of the *paravṛttis* takes full cognisance of these variations. Obviously despite the lack of a larger body of evidence, the origin of the Apabhramsa forms has to be pushed back further than has been commonly accepted by students of Indian languages and literatures.

Be that as it may, it would appear that by the 10th century distinct new languages had grown with a sizeable literary output which could be clearly distinguished from the purely Sanskrit works on the one hand and proto-Dravidian writing on the other. The contribution of the Tibeto-Burman group of languages was not minimal and this linguistic group played an important role. The emergence of these fully-developed languages did not replace or substitute activity in Sanskrit or Pali or Prakrit. The new languages and literatures were concurrent, sometimes complementary and at other times overlaying the activity in Sanskrit. This will be evident from a comparison of the chapter on Sanskrit poetry and all others included in the present section of essays on traditional Indian poetry. It would appear that the writing of works in Sanskrit and in Indian languages was not restricted to any groups of individuals mutually opposed, instead, often they may have been the same persons and in most cases, the literary genres in Indian languages clearly reflect a deep and sure reliance on Sanskrit sources. As in other spheres of Indian cultural development, here also the development of Indian languages and literatures was a new multiple flowering without a break with the tradition or an obliteration of the past. It must be remembered that in India was born the concept of the multiple-armed and many-faced gods and goddesses The multiple arms and faces with one body and spirit is a perfect paradigm for understanding the phenomenon of the multiplicity of languages and literatures in medieval India. While each language and literature and poetic form retains its respective distinct individuality, in totality they all belong to one unified sensibility which is clearly distinguishable as uniquely Indian.

In the chapters that follow it will be clear that despite the vast range of themes and content which stimulate the poets, there are some which are recurrent. Foremost amongst these is the poetry which revolves around the myths and legends embodied in Sanskrit literature, Valmiki's Ramayana, Vyasa's Mahabharata, Kalidasa's *Kumāra Sambhava* and *Meghadūta*. *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the *Gīta-Govinda* appear to provide a solid ground plan for the architectural edifices of much of this great poetry written during the period. It is interesting to note however that although these Sanskrit sources provide the inspiration and the essential framework, each creative writer modifies the theme and the characters of the epics, puranas and the *kāvyas* to suit his genius and purpose. Of the nearly 360 versions of the Rama story known to different languages and poetic traditions, no two are identical. The story is sometimes transformed beyond recognition by changing the beginning or the end; at other times, many characters of the epic particularly Ravana, Vibhishana, Hanuman, undergo a transmutation. One has only to compare the *Rāmacaritam* belonging to the *Pāṭṭu* school of poetry in Malayalam, the Kannada Ramayana of Torava Narahari, the Ramayana of Kamba, to be convinced of this. Even the hero Rama of the Bengali *Vicitra Rāmāyaṇa* and that of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* of Ezhuttachan in Malayalam and Ramadas' Rama of the Marathi Ramayana, not to speak of Tulasidasa's Rama in the *Rāmacaritamānas* is distincive to each version and there is no slavish imitation. This is even more marked in the case of characters like Sita, Lakshman, Ravana and Hanuman. Some poets, like Madana Bandharao in Gujarati, create an entire work around a single character, say Hanuman,

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as in the *Hanumantopākhyāna*. Altogether the Rama theme provides a unique unifying thread. It is also responsible for a staggering variety of treatment of theme, characterization, poetic forms and metrical patterns.

What is true of the Rama theme is almost truer of the episodes of the Mahabharata which inspire a vast number of poets and authors/writers. Each makes a very judicious and purposeful selection of episode and character and imbues the ancient epic with a new contemporary significance. Vyasa's composition is undoubtedly fundamental, but it appears to provide only a basic plan to construct a new edifice. A comparison of the treatment of Krishna, Arjuna, Bhima, Yudhishtira, Duryodhana, Kunti, Draupadi in the works of Saraladasa in Oriya, Nannaya in Telugu, of Pampa in Kannada, Premananda Bhatta in Gujarati, of Bharatam Pandya and Villiputtuvar in Tamil, of Tikkana in Telugu will clearly bear this out.

While the epics provide the stimulus for one type of writing in all Indian literatures, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Gita-Govinda* travel to all parts of India and influence creative writing in an unprecedented manner. The two works were written between the 10th and 12th centuries and within decades of their composition, they appear to have travelled the length and breadth of India and transformed all that they touched. Nearly 20 versions in Indian languages of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* are known. From Assam to Kerala, from Gujarat to Orissa, poets, musicians, dancers and actors composed lyrics and dramas based on the life of Krishna as described in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and the love of Krishna and Radha as described in the *Gīta-Govinda*. There were both straight translations such as Shankaradev's translation of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and that of Hem Sarasvati's of the *Gīta-Govinda*, both in Assamiya, but there were also an equal number of modified versions wherein many contemporary events were added and modifications carried out. In Malayalam, for example, the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and *Gita-Govinda* conjointedly were responsible for Manaveda's work called *Kṛṣṇagīti* (cf. *Kṛṣṇāṭṭam*) in Malayalam. The *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in Oriya by Jagannathdasa, the *Srīkṛṣṇa* by Maladhar Basu in Bengali, Potana's *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* in Telugu are not mere translations. Each is a distinctive re-creation.

This list could be considerably enlarged to demonstrate the seminal role of the Sanskrit epics, Puranas and *Kāvyas* in providing a thread of unity. Two other important works of this category are *Prabodha Candrodya* and *Megha Sandeśa* (or *Meghadūta*) of Kalidasa. Perhaps next to the Ramayana, the *Meghadūta* or *Megha Sandeśa* is the most popular creative work which provides the model for hundreds of poetic creations and leads to a large category of poetry called the *dūta* or *sandeśa kāvya*.

The poetic compositions based on these ancient Indian myths and legends and modelled very roughly on Sanskrit works were however given a new contemporary significance and a regional local flavour; and herein lay the original contribution of the poets of each region extending from Kashmir to Tamilnadu and Kerala, Gujarat to Orissa and Manipur. While the kernel of these works was ancient, almost eternal, the superstructure and format was new. The modifications and transformations were responsible for making these poetic works reach out to vast masses through recitation, dramatic presentation, scrolls and paintings. Understandably there was scope for innovation and experiment in the matter of metrical forms, stanzaic treatment and addition of prose passages.

Bhakti Movement

Cumulatively this rich body of poetic creations was closely related to another genre of poetic writing which may be considered a distinctively medieval phenomenon, clearly distinguishable from the *kāvya* and *nāṭaka* tradition of Sanskrit. The pervasive wave of this genre of poetry was sparked off by the popular movement generally called the *Bhakti* movement in all its ramifications, shades and tonalities. The movement itself can be traced back to many sources, but without going into the controversies of details, it

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would be sufficient to point out that whether it was the Siddhacharyas or the Vajrayanis or the Alwars or Nayanmars or the Gorakh-panthis or Ramadasis or Krishna bhaktas or hundred groups or sub-groups including the Sufis, they were one and all committed to a total mystical state, a beatific ecstatic experience. The writers and the poets came from all sections of society, weavers, cobblers, blacksmiths, washermen, gardeners, even kshatriyas and brahmins. Some belonged to the temple milieus, such as the Swamis of Vrindavana and few amongst the Alwars and Nayanmars. Others roamed the villages and the jungles of tribal India. Cumulatively they were responsible for creating a class of poetry which reverberated in every home and hamlet, tribe and village in solo or collective form. The idiom was local or regional, the similes and metaphors were of everyday life and the spiritual goal articulated was always of the ascending spirit where the human and the divine commingled and were mutually dependent. The imprisoning walls of sects and barriers of caste and creed were broken and each sang of the right of every individual to attain the highest state of beatitude and bliss. Each essay in the section bears testimony to this pervasive movement where the Sufi and the Vaishnavite, the Saivite and the Sahajaya were indeed articulating an incessant desire of attaining the supreme in his or her distinctively personal language. It is this class of medieval poetry which provides the literatures of the Indian languages with an Indian flavour shared by all and yet with a regional and individual identity. This is the Indian mosaic, where not the smallest part loses its individuality and its importance, and is yet a part in a total design. Also, it is this class of lyric poetry in a variety of metres, ranging from the *aṣṭapadi*, *chautiśa*, *dvipadi*, *trikhaṇḍi* and *the muktaka* which continues well into the 18th and 19th century so as to provide the essential background for modern Indian literature. The verses of a Lalla, a Mirabai, Eknath, Dhyaneshwar, Namadeva, Manikka-vachakar, Tiruppandavar and Guru Nanak, Bulla Shah, Annamacharya, Purandardasa, Nilaguna Sivayogi, Haridasa, Shah Muntoji, Brahmani, and Mahapati, etc. are the national heritage received from these saint mystics, the true integrators of India at a profound psychical level. In moments of stress and strain, sorrow and grief, verses of these poetry emerge from the vortex of the collective Indian psyche giving succour and sustenance.

But the re-living of the heroic epics and the effortless flow of powerful experiences was not the only level of the medeival poets' consciousness; these were not an escape mechanism, even if the heroic, the lyrical and the spiritual provided a strategy for survival in a period of momentous socio-political conflicts and changes. The poets of medieval India also lived squarely in the here and now. The historical events did not leave them untouched or unscathed. Vacanakārās of Kannada and others such as Chand Bardoi, Jayasi, Quataban, the writer of *Mṛgāvati*, and others were stimulated and provoked. Throughout the Indian subcontinent appeared great works which moved on one level—the socio-historical and on the other a deeper psychical level where the earlier philosophic tenets were presented in a new mode. Many are the stories of the infatuation of a king for another queen or a commoner, and in almost all cases the beloved dies or commits suicide. This is the theme of *Padmavatā* of Jayasi, of *Madhumālati* and of Qutaban's *Mṛgāvati*. The long narrative ballad form was the most suited to the theme. In course of time, the ballad form assumed an unprecedented importance giving rise to the numerous dramatic forms such as *yātra*, *yakṣagāṅa*, *bhāgavata mela*, *nauṭanki*, *khayāl*, *bhand jashan* on the one hand and the *kathākālakṣepam* and the *harikathā* on the other. The socio-cultural themes such as Allah Udal, etc. had a moral and didactic purpose and the performance of these works became the common heritage of the forms today recognized as the *bhāvai*, *nauṭanki*, *khayāl*, *nācha macha*, etc. The historio-mythological themes also provided the verbal content of forms like *yakṣagāṅa*, *bhāgavata mela*, the *sahijātra* of Orissa, the *yātra* of Bengal and the *kathakaḷi* of Kerala. Indeed, at a time when Indian poetry lost its lustre at the elite literate level, it was these dramatic forms which preserved the poetry. The forms have often been mistaken for purely folk theatre bereft of a literary tradition but a closer examination reveals that they are

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inextricably woven into the medieval poetic and dramatic forms with a rich texture of theme, content and technical complexity. It is the actual dramatic presentation and the oral recitation of the literary composition which accounts for the unsurmountable place of music and musical structure in medieval Indian poetry of any genre.

Poetry whether of the epic or the lyric writers, dramatists or ballad composers took cognisance of the musical modes. Indeed, more often than not, the writers provided the musical mode (*rāga*) and the rhythmic pattern (*tāḷa*). Not without reason poets ranging from Jayadeva to Mirabai, from Namadeva to Dhyaneswar, Tyagaraja and Dikshitar and Swati Tirunal clearly mention the *rāga* and *tāḷa* and provide in many cases the musical notation to their compositions. In a modern situation where each art is at pains to assert its autonomy and to establish its independence, this may seem strange, but it is well to remember that traditional Indian poetry began from the premise that each art was interrelated to the other. Although the 'word' (*vāk*) and the verbal (*vācika*) was the central axis for the poet the final manifestation was only possible with a full employment of the techniques of music, dance, painting and drama. Little wonder that the verbal imagery is replete with references to music and dance and the final verbal product has been sung, danced, performed and painted.

Development in medieval Indian poetry cannot therefore be dissociated from developments in Indian music, drama and painting. Medieval music is only an aspect of the lyrical poetry and the poetry is one facet of the music. The same is true of medieval painting, the epics and the language versions of the *Bhāgavata* and the *Gīta-Govinda* lyrics of the *bhakti* schools and the *rītikāla* compositions. The works *Mṛgāvati*, *Laurchanda*, *Āllāh Udal* were painted as miniatures throughout the Indian subcontinent and in each case the poetic imagery and structure and the musical mode and even the *tāḷa* system determined the visual interpretation. The poet painted and sang in words, the musicians painted and expressed through sound and the painter narrated and sang through line and colour tonalities; this was the medieval traditional heritage which enriched the ancient unified Sanskrit stream and resulted in multiple streams never forgetting the common perennial source and always responding to the temporal and spatial environment. Altogether, they ultimately reflected a comprehensive ocean of Indian sensibility.

Indianness

Mobility and interaction amongst languages was equally impressive. The essays of this section disprove beyond doubt the hypothesis that pan-Indian movements were the gift of the modern concept of a nation-state. More meaningful than a political national consciousness, there was an Indian awareness which can be seen in all these works. Equally significant is the role of the socio-backward classes in the making of this poetry. In a period where we are making conscious efforts at achieving an egalitarian society, it is often forgotten that traditional medieval poetry is in no small measure the gift to India of many amongst these lowly and humble, wise and enlightened people. The impact of this poetry would have been much less had it been restricted to an elite group; the essays of each language bring out this factor powerfully.

The essays also reflect the incessant quest for evolving new forms and metrical patterns, drawing upon the rich reservoir of oral traditions and folk poetry; the interplay of levels of expression is characteristic. Each essay throws light on the shining gem of each poetic creation making the total mosaic.

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Assamese

SATYENDRANATH SARMA

Beginning

The Indo-Aryan languages of eastern India, viz. Assamese, Bengali, Oriya and Maithili show their earliest written literature in the mystic songs composed by the Buddhist Siddhacharyas affiliated to the Sahajayana branch of Mahayana Buddhism. These mystic songs generally known as *Caryāgīti* or *Caryāpada* numbering 46 were composed between the 10th and 12th centuries of the Christian era by 23 Siddhas. The contents of these lyrics are mystic in nature and dwell mainly upon the esoteric doctrines, beliefs and practices of Sahajayana. These lyrics not only represent the earliest written specimens of some of the important linguistic characteristics of Assamese, Bengali and other eastern N. I. A. languages, but also preserve the earliest literary expression reflecting the social and religious life of the common people. Many of the vocables, idioms, expressions and grammatical formations found in the lyrics are still prevalent in Assamese in the original or slightly modified forms. Bengali, Oriya and Maithili scholars have noticed many of the characteristics of their own languages in the language of these songs. The act of tracing the literary and linguistic beginnings by the sister languages proves that the language of the *caryās* represents the latest phase of the Magadhan *Apabhramśa* in which the independent characteristics of each of the above languages did not evolve marking their separate identity.

The literary importance of these *dohās* or songs lies in the style of expressing the arid doctrines, religious tenets and beliefs through the medium of homely diction and allegorical style of exposition with the help of scenes from everyday life. The homeliness of diction and picturesque details of some of the lyrics reveal the poetic sensibility of some of the composers. The picture of the Śavara couple in their traditional sylvan costumes and decorations narrated in lyric No. 28 in the edition of H. P. Sastri (1916), may be cited as an instance of poetic description:

On the lofty peak of the hill resides the Śavara girl. She decorates her head with peacock's feathers and adorns her neck with a garland of guñja-berries. Oh frenzied Śavara youth, do not shoot me through mistake. I am no other than your beloved wife Sahajasundari (the naturally beautiful one). Diverse trees and shrubs are blossoming and their blooming branches are kissing the sky. The Śavari maiden with dangling ear ornament is roaming in the forest alone. Having prepared the bed on the bedstead of three *dhātus* (humours) the Śavara youth passed the night embracing Nairamani Devi (Śavari) in great passion. (tr.)

The above lyric bereft of its allegorical significance apparently projects a beautiful picture of a tribal couple roaming in the hilly region. Such delightfully appealing pictures couched in familiar garb are found scattered in the lyrics from which the aesthetic sensibility of the mystic Siddhas can be understood easily.

Poetry before the Vaishnavite Revival

The date of composition of the *Caryāpadas* cannot be brought forward beyond the 12th century A.D. The next two centuries seem to be absolutely barren of any written literature, for no literary specimen of this period has yet been traced. From the 14th century onwards, Assamese literature is marked by an unbroken history of literary heritage in different branches. It may be noted in this connection that early Assamese literature owes a great deal to the patronage of kings and nobles who encouraged scholars and poets to undertake literary tasks, especially translations from the epics and the puranas, by granting lands and other forms of economic security. In this connection the names of King Durlabhnarayan (Durlabhanārāyaṇa) of Kamata, Mahamanikya the Barahi King, both belonging to the 14th century, King Naranarayana and his son and grandson of the 16th and 17th centuries, King Siva Simha and his successors of the 18th century deserve special mention. Following their kings some of the nobles also encouraged

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scholars and poets who in their writings ungrudgingly acknowledged this help. It may incidentally be mentioned that the early Assamese literature consists mainly of verse compositions though prose was not totally neglected. It may also be remembered here that a considerable part of our early literature was destroyed by the ravages of time, devastating floods, and the barbarous invasions of the Burmese hordes in the second decade of the 19th century when most of the cultural centres were set on fire by marauding gangs of invaders. Even then, the number of poetical works composed in the 14th and 15th centuries, now available, is sufficient for us to have a fair idea of the nature and trend of poetry current at that time.

Early Translations. The 14th century witnessed the emergence of Assamese as a fully-developed medium of poetic expression. Whatever poetry was produced during the two preceding centuries is irrecoverably lost to us. So, the history of traditional poetry in the true sense starts from the early decades of the 14th century when under the patronage of King Durlabhnarayan, Hem Saraswati composed his two works, viz. *Prahlāda-caritra* and *Hara-Gaurīsamvāda*. The former, a small *kāvya* describing the devotion of Prahlada and the fight of the man-lion (Narasimha), an incarnation of Vishnu, with Hiranyakasipu, is a simple versified version of the puranic episode without much poetic embellishment. His other work dealing with the marriage of Siva and Parvati is a mature work interspersed with poetical descriptions of natural beauty, the response of man to seasonal variations and the expression of human sentiments under different circumstances. The work bears the stamp of Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhava* and the *Kālikā Purāṇa* in respect of narrative details. Two other poets acknowledging the patronage of Durlabhnarayan are Kaviratna Saraswati and Harivara Vipra. The former translated a part of *Droṇaparva* of the Mahabharata and the latter is credited with three episodic *kāvyas* mainly based on the narration of the *Jamini-Bhārata* but considerably developed by his own imagination. The central theme of the two important works, viz. *Lavakuśar Yuddha* and *Vabruvāhanar Yuddha* is the fight between the fathers and sons. In the former *kāvya*, Rama is worsted by his twin sons and in the latter, Arjuna the hero of the Kurukshetra war is put to shame in a grim battle by his son Vabruvahana. Harivar expresses his mode of translation in the following verse:

> kāhāro hariṣa pade śloka ekagaile
> kāhāro hariṣa vistṛta lambhā bhaile
> savāro āniyā sār vipra harivara
> bolo aśvamedha-yajña pada rucikara.

> Some are pleased when a *pada* (a single couplet) covers a *śloka*, others are glad when a *śloka* is expanded and elucidated. Harivar Vipra has composed these verses following a via-media course by taking the essence of different viewpoints. (tr.)

In fact, the poet in some places summarizes the original narratives while expanding and embellishing some other portion exercising poetic liberty. He appears to be fond of repeatedly using homely similes and metaphors and drawing pictures based on observation of Assamese social life. He is also fond of giving details from scenes of warfare, a narrative feature which became highly popular with the later poets of the Vaishnavite period.

The most noteworthy poet of the pre-Sankarite period is undoubtedly Madhav Kandali (Mādhava Kandali, c. A.D. 1350) the translator of the Ramayana. He has referred to the patronage of King Mahamanikya, the Barahi King of eastern and central Assam of the 14th century. Sankardev, the saint-poet of the 15th century, reverentially acknowledges the greatness of Madhav Kandali by recognizing the latter as an unerring poet (apramādī kavi) and compares his own self to a rabbit beside an elephant. Though Madhav Kandali categorically states that he composed a seven-canto (*sāta kāṇḍa*) Ramayana, only the intermediary five cantos are now available. The remaining two cantos were probably missing during the time of Sankardev and Madhavdev, or they would not have added the first and last canto to the then existing version of Madhav Kandali with a view to presenting a complete version of the epic.

Madhav Kandali appears to have taken some liberty with Valmiki's composition without vitally deviating from the epic narration. In *Kiṣkindhā-kāṇḍa* the poet justifies his action of taking poetic latitude in the following words:

> You have listened to the story of Rama, highly sacred and full of various sentiments (*rasas*). Be pleased with my rendering by forgiving my faults of omission and commission. Sage Valmiki composed this work in various metres. Having carefully read and considered his composition I have rendered it into Assamese verses according to my comprehension. Who can fully comprehend the shades of meaning and *rasas* of Valmiki's composition? Birds fly according to the strength of their wings; poets compose their works for the use and welfare of the people. Accordingly they sometimes add new materials by way of fabrication and sometimes elaborate and elucidate the original, in as much as the Ramayana is not a revealed text but a *kāvya* dealing with the worldly affairs. (tr.)

From the above explanation of the poet it is clear that the work of translation of the epic was undertaken not for religious propagation but for the use and entertainment of the people. He reveals himself more as a poet than as a religious propagator in his writings. He has mostly retained the poetic passages of Valmiki and revelled in the

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emotional and sensuous elements of the earliest epic. The agony and inconsolable grief of King Dasaratha and Kausalya on the eve of Rama's exile, the wild luxuriant beauty of Chitrakuta forest, the soothing limpid flow of the river Mandakini resembling Sita's gait and slimness, the passion-arousing rainy season on the Prasravana hills intensifying Rama's pangs of separation, the gorgeous beauty and pomp and luxury of the city of Lanka enjoyed by its demoniac inhabitants, bloody fights and description of various places of scenic beauty, palaces, and of beautiful maidens, are not only graphic in detail but equally happy in choice of words and imageries. While remaining faithful to the original in the development of the principal story and the sequence of events, the poet utilizes every opportunity to make his version acceptable to Assamese readers by introducing local colour, popular touches and common proverbs and idiomatic expressions. In doing so he occasionally lowers the dignity of the original narrative of Valmiki to the popular level.

Madhav Kandali, by his powerful style, moulded and elevated the Assamese language into a suitable literary medium capable of expressing subtle poetic sensibility. His usual metre for narration was *pada* (a couplet having 8+6 syllables in each foot). He used *tripadi* (triplet) of two varieties, viz. *dulaḍi* (6+6+8 syllables) and *cabi* (8+8+10 syllables) to express mental situations, agony, pathos and tension. In fact, these three varieties of metres ruled the roost not only during the 14th and 15th centuries, but continued to predominate the metrical composition of the succeeding centuries even though nearly a half-dozen more metrical forms were introduced during the period of Vaishnavite renaissance.

Pāñcāli Kāvya (Choral Poetry). Along with the narrative *kāvyas*, the *Pāñcāli* or *ojā-pāli kāvya* also became popular with the rural folk at least from the beginning of the 15th century, if not earlier. The narrative *kāvyas* were mainly intended for recitation, but the *Pāñcāli kāvyas* were written for audio-visual performance. The party of performers is called *ojā-pāli* which consists of a leader or an expert who in turn is assisted by three or five followers. The *ojā* leads the chorus party by initiating songs to be sung in unison by the choral party followed by narrative recitation accompanied by dance, histrionics and frequent improvised dialogues with the right-hand assistant called *dainā pāli*. Dialogues, however, do not form a part of the written *kāvya*.

The popular literary form of entertainment comprising choral songs in classical melodies (*rāgas*) followed by narrative verses had been in vogue from the 15th century. It is of two varieties, one dealing with epic or puranic stories and the other with the exploits of the snake-goddess Manasa and her conflict with the Saivite merchant Chandradhar for establishing her position as an adored deity in the Hindu pantheon. The poets who composed this type of *kāvya* are Mankar, Durgavar and Pitambar of the last quarter of the 15th and the first half of the 16th centuries.

Of the three *Pāñcāli* poets Mankar appears to be the senior-most. His only work *Padmā-purāṇa* (Manasa is called Padma) starts with the genesis of the world and then goes on to describe the marriage of Hara and Parvati ending with the birth of Padma, the daughter of Siva, who becomes the snake-goddess immediately after her birth in the nether region. The work, though dealing with gods and goddesses, nonetheless full of sensual descriptions presented with is rugged simplicity and rustic humour. On the whole, the poet appears unsophisticated caring little for thematic refinement. The second poet Durgavar Kayastha, an adept musician, has two works consisting of tuned lyrics and narrative verses, *Beulā-upākhyāna* and *Giti Rāmāyaṇa*, to his credit. The latter, a mature book, is a competent treatment of the Ramayana theme in a lyrical vein. In the extant version of the *Giti Rāmāyaṇa* two cantos are missing while the last is very briefly treated. The lyrics tuned to classical melodies are generally employed to unfold and analyze the feelings, emotions, mental conflicts and agonies of the characters. These lyrics speak of Durgavar's ability to paint mental pictures under different situations. A specimen of his lyric from *Āraṇya Kāṇḍa* in translation is given below. The lyric expresses the mental agony of Sita when abducted by Ravana in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana. It may be remembered that Sita practically compelled the unwilling Lakshmana to go to the help of Rama leaving her alone in the cottage, thus affording an opportunity to Ravana to kidnap her:

> Alas! What a cruel fate! Fetters of one's action cannot be loosened or broken. I have brought slur on the unblemished family by sending Lakshmana away from the cottage. Finding me alone Ravana is abducting me. I am lost due to my own foolish action. After returning from the hunting expedition and not finding me within the protective circle of the cottage Rama would roam about the forest in my quest and will be disconsolate. My lord will then lend his ears to infamy and evil opinion of the people regarding my character. He will then believe that Lakshmana was sent away by me with the evil intention of eloping with Ravana. Raghupati will no doubt consider me an unfaithful woman. He would think that being unable to tolerate the loneliness and hardship of forest life I have deserted him preferring a life of ease and comfort. He will then think that a beautiful woman loves as long as wealth and luxury last; they could never be permanently owned. Thus my lord will lament incessantly blaming me all the while. (tr.)

Durgavar does not appear to be familiar with Valmiki, but his acquaintance with Madhav Kandali is deep and abiding. While Madhav Kandali's verses revel in depicting

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the dynamic movement of the story, Durgavar's lyrics depend on spectacular situations and tearful lamentations to unfold the passions and emotions of the characters.

The last of the trio, Pitambar (Pītāmbara) Kavi was an erudite scholar of poetic genius. He is the author of *Mārkaṇḍeya Caṇḍī*, *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* Book X, *Nala-Damayanti* and *Uṣā-Pariṇaya*; the last two are composed in the *pāñcāli* style with lyrics and narrative verses. His translation of the *Bhāgavata* is one of the earliest attempts to render the *purāṇā* into Assamese verse. Pitambar refers to Prince Samara Simha alias Sukladvaja of the Koch dynasty (16th century). His works are mainly translations of puranas or puranic episodes but they are neither verbatim nor faithful renderings of the original narratives. He deviates occasionally by introducing sensuous and popular elements with a view to entertaining the masses for whom his writings were intended. Because of his emphasis on secular and sensuous elements Sankardev decried him as *kāmasika* (sensual poet). The following extract from a lyric of *Uṣā-pariṇaya* will perhaps give an idea of Pitambar's sensual approach and poetic gift.

While moving in the flower garden (*puṣpavana*) in the vernal month, Usha happened to notice the erotic dalliance of Siva and Parvati. Having seen it she thinks mournfully:

> Happy is the woman who dallies with her husband in the sweet season of the year. She who is deprived of her husband's presence at this time of the season is leading a worthless life. Let her commit suicide by throwing herself into a river having tied a pitcher on her neck. I was born in a royal family for nothing in as much as I have to move alone in the garden. Flowers are blooming, the cuckoo is cooing, a gentle breeze is blowing all over the place, the bees are humming around the flowers. Life is worth-living only for those who are lucky to be accompanied by their beloved ones. What sin did I commit that I have to pass my time in an agony of separation without having my beloved by my side. Sandal paste, flower garlands and all my ornaments are of no avail at this hour of distress. Even the cool breeze is emitting heat and camphor-scented betel-nut tastes like gall. (tr.)

The early channel of literature with its two branches practically terminated with Pitambar Kavi. The next phase marks the efflorescence of Assamese literature under the Vaishnavite renaissance movement.

The Vaishnavite Ranaissance

The movement began by about the last decade of the 15th century, attained its climax during the 16th and 17th centuries and began to fade by the middle of the 18th century. During this period of more than 200 years some of the important puranas, the two epics and many *kāvyas* based on puranic themes were composed, dramas based on religious subjects were written and enacted on a large scale, a new type of dramatic performance known as *Aṇkiyā Bhāonā* and some classical types of dances were introduced and lyrics set to classical melodies were composed and sung. Over and above these, prose, as the religious and secular writings came into vogue, became an alternative medium of literary expression. The biographical literature dealing with the lives and activities of saints and preachers became increasingly popular in religious circles and as a result scores of biographies, more correctly hagiographies, were written during the two centuries of the Vaishnavite revival.

The movement initiated by Sankardev left an undying impression on Assam's religious, literary and social fields. Assam valley in the 15th century was politically divided into two independent kingdoms besides petty local principalities and it was inhabited by a heterogeneous population belonging to different ethnic, tribal and religious groups speaking different dialects. The tantric Śakti cult accompanied by some gruesome rites was practised by a section of people and as a result the fundamental ideals and philosophy of Hinduism were either forgotten or wilfully neglected and monotheism was replaced by polytheism. With a view to restoring Hinduism to its pristine purity and glory and providing the heterogeneous sections of people with a uniform, simple and unadulterated faith Sankardev propagated the Bhakti cult as propounded in the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* and the *Gīta* with special emphasis on motiveless action. He strictly insisted on monotheistic devotion to Vishnu or Krishna and extolled *śravaṇa* and *kīrtana* as efficacious modes of devotional worship. To popularize the cult he naturally turned to the translation of epics and puranas and the performance of dance, drama and music. Thus Sankardev ushered in a new era of devotional and literary renaissance in Assam. He was ably assisted by a galaxy of scholars and poets, but for whose unflinching devotion to their duties it would not have been possible for Sankardev alone, however great and able he might be, to effect such a change in society.

Advent of Sankardev. Sankardev (Śaṅkaradeva, 1449–1568) was born in a well-to-do Kayastha family at Bardowa, a place in the present district of Nowgong in central Assam. He was thoroughly educated in the ancient system of Sanskrit learning and he acquired equal proficiency in music. A man of strong physique and charming personality, well-versed in scriptures, persuasive in speech, efficient in organizing ability and uncompromising in respect of principle, Sankardev could attract a large number of people to his new faith of monotheistic creed. Of all the followers Madhavdev (Mādhavadeva, 1489–1596), who was won over to the new creed after hours of debate, easily became the guru's right-hand man by his faithful service, poetic ability, musical talent and resourcefulness in meeting any exigency

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Both of them travelled widely and experienced much. By travelling and staying at different places from six months to twenty years and propagating their faith they practically covered the entire Brahmaputra valley. This ultimately paved the way for conversion of the majority of the people of the valley to Vaishnavism. Sankardev and his followers met with occasional obstruction from the contemporary Ahom and Koch kings as well as from the priestly class who used to thrive on ritualistic practices, but overcoming all opposition he and his followers could firmly implant his faith on the soil of Assam.

Nature of Poetry. The most powerful weapon in popularizing the new faith was literature and art. The Vaishnavite preachers successfully utilized both these media for the propagation of the cult. Sankardev was himself a poet and dramatist of a high order and composed six plays, more than a dozen poetical works and scores of lyrics. He was ably assisted in the literary regeneration by Madhavdev, Ananta Kandali, Ram Saraswati and many other junior contemporaries. The poetical production from the 16th to the 19th centuries may be classified into six categories: (i) translations from the epics and purāṇas, (ii) *kāvyas* based on episodes or stories from the epics and purāṇas, (iii) lyrics, (iv) secular and utilitarian *kāvyas*, (v) biographical works, and (vi) devotional anthologies and compendia.

It may be noted that literature was produced mainly in two centres, the courtly sphere and the Vaishnavite *sattras*. Though the royal courts had initially put some obstacles in the development of Vaishnavism, nevertheless, they encouraged poets and scholars to translate many important Sanskrit works into metrical Assamese. The Vaishnavite centres (*sattras*) not only sheltered the Vaishnavas but also afforded a congenial atmosphere to devotees for producing religious literature and poetical compositions. Patronage of nobles and influential men was another factor for the growth of literature in medieval Assam.

At a time when literacy was confined to the privileged classes it was the custom to read or recite and explain poetical compositions before an assembly of listeners. Traditional poetry, therefore, was always composed keeping an assembly of listeners in view. Through it religious, didactic, ethical and moral instructions were also imparted along with literary entertainment. Being popular in its appeal the traditional poetry avoided as far as possible subtle and complex philosophical discussions, but where such discussions were considered unavoidable the poets tried to resolve it to a simpler form.

The Vaishnavite period is remarkable for introducing a half-dozen new metres over and above those used in the earlier period. *Lecāri* (10+10+14), *ekāvalī* (6+5), *jhumurā* (8+8), *muktāvalī* (6+6+6+8), *kusum-mālā* (6+6) and a few moric metres were introduced to impart variety to rhythmic patterns (figures in brackets indicate the number of syllables in each foot). The language used by the poets including those of the earlier period was a sort of literary language with some artificial forms and affixes. Though it is not far removed from the spoken language it contains certain artificial forms which gave dignity and grandeur to the language. In the case of Vaishnavite lyrics (*Bargita*) the Brajabuli language (an artificial literary language based on Maithili but largely strengthened by Assamese forms with sprinkling of Avadhi and Brajabhākhā) was uniformly used. Another noteworthy feature of traditional poetry is the profuse use of poetic conventions prevalent from ancient times in classical literatures. The poets also employed pictures, images and other figures of speech like similes and metaphors derived from personal observation of an agricultural society. The monsoon region of eastern India had some influence in shaping some of the finest imagery of the medieval poets.

Translation from Epics and Purāṇas. Having discussed above some of the main characteristics of traditional poetry, a survey of the metrical translation of the two epics and the purāṇas by the Vaishnavites and later poets may be given here. The *purāṇa* that drew the attention of the Vaishnavite poets most is undoubtedly *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, because the fundamental principles and concepts of Assamese Vaishnavism are derived from it. Sankardev being the initiator of the Vaishnava movement first undertook the translation of this purana and himself completed eight books (*skandhas*) out of twelve. He translated books I, II, III, VII, VIII, X, XI and XII into lucid and smooth Assamese verse. While translating the verses of the original he has selected only the essential and important verses propagating his faith. In some passages Sankardev's rendering is interpretative and takes the form of elucidation and elaboration. Of all the books of the *Bhāgavata*, book X (*Daśama skandha*) is held in highest regard by the Vaishnava community of Assam for the simple reason that it deals with the life activities and exploits of Krishna the adored deity of the Vaishnavas. It is also one of the popular scriptures of the community. The original version containing 90 chapters deals with the early life, sports and exploits of the boy Krishna. The remaining chapters were left to be completed by his favourite disciple Ananta Kandali who, in spite of being an adept in composing Sanskrit verses, preferred to write in his mother tongue. The part of *Daśama skandha* composed by Sankardev amply reflects his poetic genius by its wealth of detail, lucidity of style, homeliness of diction and the power of conjuring up the desired atmosphere. The following specimen quoted at random in translation would give an idea of the technique of Sankardev's translation and also poetic ability. The verses are taken from the Brahmāmohan episode of the *Bhāgavata* (X/13/44–45).

In trying to enchant Vishnu (Krishna) who is above

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illusion, but keeps the world in illusion, the creator (Brahma) himself was puzzled and bewildered: O king (Parikṣit) just as a few atoms of fog cannot envelop the darkness of the night, but rather get merged in the latter, just as the gleam of fire-flies cannot shine in the broad daylight because of the powerful rays of the sun, similarly an attempt to outwit a greater personality by a lesser one reacts adversely upon his own self. (tr.)

Sankardev's Assamese version of the above verses runs thus:

> Trying to enchant Krishna, Brahma himself became bewildered and confused. He could not make out what was real and what was unreal. Intellect and memory having failed him the creator was at a loss; words failed him. He was, as it were, pierced by his own arrows. He was undoing himself by attempting to deceive the Great One. Like a piece of tiny burning faggot or a spark trying to outshine the midday sun, like a streamlet trying to outbid a mighty ocean, like a piece of cotton trying to prevent a heavy gale, like a tiny spark in the presence of a wild fire, like an ant-hill before the Meru mountain, like a tiny fish charging against the powerful '*mahāsa*'l (ophiocephalus striotus) fish and like a mouse trying to gnaw a hole in the very presence of the lion, Brahma similarly attempting to bewitch Krishna by his *māyā*, became himself bewildered and stupefied and lost his sense and intellect. (tr.)

Most of the similes in the above passage are the creation of Sankardev. Though permeated by devotional sentiment, the *Daśama skandha* of Sankardev projects an immensely human and realistic picture of a pampered and naughty child who steals milk and butter, quarrels with milkmaids, indulges in various games with playmates and receives frequent chastisement from his foster-mother Yasoda. The description of the *Rāsakrīḍā* episodes of Krishna in erotic dalliance with the maidens of Gokula in the autumnal moonlit night in the sylvan surrounding of Vrindavana, joy and amusement in union and sorrow in separation from Krishna on the part of the gopis have been vividly described with poetic flavour and lyrical charm. The same felicity of expression is noticed in the rendering of other books of the *Bhāgavata*.

The other important translator of the *Bhāgavata* is Ananta Kandali alias Chandrabharati. He rendered some chapters of book VI and the latter part of book X covering 41 chapters of the original source. Ananta Kandali expresses his purpose of composing verses in Assamese in the following way: 'I am competent to write verse in Sanskrit, yet I have decided to write in the verses of the spoken language so that non-Brahmins and women could comprehend and appreciate my composition.' Ananta Kandali followed more or less the technique of Madhav Kandali and Sankardev in selecting what should be summarized and what passages or verses of the original source should be expanded or embellished. Other notable poets who contributed partially to the completion of the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* are Gopalcharan Dvija, Aniruddha Kayastha, Kesav Kayastha and Ratnakar Misra. Thus the books comprising almost all the episodes and stories, including religious, ethical views and broad philosophical outlines, of the *Bhāgavata* were completed by the end of the first half of the 17th century.

The next important purāṇa translated in its entirety is *Brahmavaivarta-purāṇa*. It is divided into four major sections: *Brahmakāṇḍa*, *Prakṛti-kāṇḍa*, *Gaṇapati-kāṇḍa* and *Kṛṣṇa-janmakāṇḍa*. It is comparatively a later purana though it is considered a mahāpurāṇa. This purāṇa lays special emphasis on the amorous dalliance of Krishna with the milkmaids of Vrindavana of whom Radha, conspicuously absent in earlier Vaishnavapuranas, occupies the foremost position. The poetic element of the purāṇa is no less conspicuous. This purāṇa was rendered into Assamese verse in the 18th century by several poets of whom Kaviraj Chakravarti (Kavirāja Cakravarti; c. 1670) is more known for his voluminous contribution. He was the court poet of King Rudra Simha (ruled, 1696–1714) and King Siva Simha (ruled, 1714–44). The poet is noted for his smooth and mellifluous verse and faithful adherence to the original source. Other poets who undertook translation of the same purana and completed partially or wholly are Balarama Dvij (Dvija), Durgeswar Dvij and Ratikanta Dvij. All these poets flourished between the latter half of the 18th century and the first decades of the 19th. Their rendering is faithful but devoid of selective originality.

Although part-translations of the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* were rendered as early as the 17th century, a complete version was made available by Parasuram Dvij (Paraśurāma Dvija) in the first half of the 19th century. He also produced a complete version of *Dharma-purāṇa*, although a better version of the latter purana was made available by Kavichandra Dvij (Kavicandra Dvija, c. 1700–60) during the reign of King Siva Simha. Parasuram Dvij was a scholar though a poor poet, but his predecessor Kavichandra, a court poet, produced a more competent version, a colourfully illustrated copy of which is now available. Besides the above complete versions of the puranas, partial translations of a few more purāṇas, viz. *Harivamśa*, *Padmapurāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeya-purāṇa*, *Vāmana-purāṇa*, *Brahmāṇḍa-purāṇa*, *Kalki-purāṇa* are also available in Assamese verse forms. A complete version of *Brhanna-dīya-purāṇa* by Bhubaneswar Bachaspati (Bhuvaneśvara Vācaspati, 18th century) was made in the court of Kachari King Tamradvaj (Tāmradvaja) in Khaspur in the early part of the 18th century. Most of the puranic versions were prepared in the 17th and 18th centuries of the Christian era. The use of local colour by introducing the flora and fauna of Assam, dress and ornaments, marriage and so

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festivals, food and social habits wherever feasible considerably induced the readers to extend their sympathy for the narration.

Epic Versions. We have already referred to the versions of Madhav Kandali and Durgavar in the early part of this discussion. During the period of the Vaishnavite revival a concerted endeavour was undertaken to educate the masses in the epic lores which had been unintelligible to them on account of the Sanskrit language in which they are composed. To King Narnarayan goes the credit of initiating the translation of the great epic in an organized manner. He entrusted the work to Ram (Rama) Saraswati alias Bharata-bhūṣaṇa, a celebrated scholar and poet of the court whom he appointed as the translator-in-chief of the project. After the death of Narnarayan, Ram Saraswati migrated from Cooch Behar to the capital of the eastern Koch kingdom in Kamrup and enjoyed the patronage of Raghunarayan (ruled, 1581–1603) and his immediate successors. Ram Saraswati himself translated thirty thousand *ślokas* of the original epic and the remaining parts were completed by his associates and successors. The extant Assamese version, containing more than one translation of some *parvas*, took nearly two hundred years to complete, the major part being written during Ram Saraswati's lifetime. It was begun towards the last quarter of the 16th century and the last book *Svargārohaṇaparva* was completed towards the end of the 18th century by Prithuram Dvij (Pṛthurām Dvija, 18th century) during the reign of Kamaleswar Simha (ruled, 1795–1810). The process of translation was neither continuous nor implemented by a single individual. It is the product of a set of scholar-poets belonging to different periods. Ram Saraswati's son Gopinath Pathak, Kamsari Kayastha, Vidyapanchanana, Damodar Das (Damodara Dasa) and Prithuram Dvij are the prominent poets of the Mahabharata.

Assamese versions of different books are not *ad verbatim* translations of the epic. The translators have followed the thread of the original narrative without being too literal or faithful, but important and meaningful verses pregnant with thought and ideas which could be profitably absorbed by the masses have been retained. As the Assamese poets summarized the stories and narratives by pruning the luxuriant details of the source, they preferred to present the stories according to their convenience keeping in view the taste and intellectual comprehension of the audience. The Sanskrit Mahabharata was used as a peg to hang up all sorts of philosophies, sectarian ideas and beliefs, religious dogmas and ethical teachings resulting in an enormous growth of extraneous materials within the broad framework of the principal story. The number of stories unconnected or very thinly connected are also too numerous. Assamese poets have been able to steer their course by wading through diverse currents and cross-currents of philosophical, religious and other thoughts and beliefs of the original epic by scrupulous adherence to the mainstream of the principal stories.

The popularity of the Assamese version is best illustrated in the emphasis laid on depicting elemental passion and emotions. Love, jealousy, anger, heroism, filial affection and brotherly feeling, vindictiveness—all these have been amply illustrated through the stories, giving them a touch of Assamese social life wherever possible. The poets dealing with the Mahabharata theme appear to have exhibited special enthusiasm in depicting heroic sentiment and consequently we find minute details of warfare verging to the point of monotony.

The principal characters in the Assamese version are not always cast in the heroic mould of the original epic. Thus Bhima in the Assamese version is a symbol of physical strength; he is a glutton and lacks aesthetic sensibility but is always faithful to his elder brother. Sahadeva is more a scholar than a hero and his advice is eagerly sought in a crisis. Yudhisthira is depicted as virtuous and truthful, but a timid man who tries to stay safely away from scenes of violence and killing. Here is an example of his timidity in the face of danger. When Bhojakata Asura attacked the Pandavas, Yudhisthira had to be carried away to a safer distance by Nakula and finally when the Asura was killed and his huge body was lying on the ground Yudhisthira trembling like leaves in a gust of wind became unconscious. The majestic grandeur of Bhishma, the chivalrous versatility of Arjuna, the vaunting nature of Karna, the jealousy and vanity of Duryodhana and the crooked mind of Sakuni have generally been retained, although deviation from archetypes are not uncommon. In fact the characters of the Assamese Mahabharata, though generally conforming, in broad outlines, to the original models, are not exact replicas of the original counterparts.

As regards the Ramayana we have two complete metrical versions and one prose version during the period of Vaishnavite revival. It has already been discussed in the earlier section that Madhav Kandali's version is the foremost metrical translation in Assamese, but its first and the last cantos having been lost were completed by Madhavdev and Sankardev respectively. In *Ādikāṇḍa* or *Bālakāṇḍa* of Madhavdev only those episodes and stories have been chosen which have a direct bearing on tracing the early life of Rama. While some of the episodes have been totally omitted some others have been casually touched on or rapidly passed over. Here the early history of Rama till his marriage is the main thread of narration and the hero has been elevated to Godhood. It may be mentioned that Madhav Kandali, following Valmiki, depicts Rama as an ideal hero, but rarely as an incarnation of Vishnu. Sankardev, in his *Uttarakāṇḍa*, has focussed his attention on the later history of Rama after his coronation ceremony avoiding extraneous narration of the original source. He also projects Rama as an embodiment of Godhood. His rendering is replete with pathetic scenes

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delineating the conjugal tragedy of Rama and Sita and disowning of Lakshmana under dire situations. These sorrowful scenes have been so vividly and touchingly described that readers are moved to tears at every stage of the narration.

Sankardev's junior contemporary Ananta Kandali, a staunch Vaishnava, prepared a Vaishnavite version of Madhav Kandali's work. Ananta Kandali writes of this fact in the following way: 'Madhav Kandali had composed a version of the Ramayana before me. I am very much delighted to hear his composition and it moved my innermost heart as I listened to it. But Madhav Kandali has depicted Rama's ideally human character without projecting his divine and supernatural aspects. As a result, the adorable qualities of Rama have not come out in bold relief. In order to remove that deficiency I am trying to unfold the character of Rama in the light of *bhakti*. I hope the audience will not be annoyed with me but will listen carefully to the divine story of Rama. Know it for certain that Rama is the Absolute Brahma in human shape.'

Ananta Kandali has tried to metamorphose the version of Madhav Kandali by identifying Rama with Vishnu and Krishna. 'Having consulted and discussed the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa* I have composed the Ramayana'—thus speaks the poet while justifying his action in overemphasizing the Vaishnavite ideals in his version. But to a discerning reader it becomes apparent that Ananta Kandali did not materially change the version of Madhav Kandali barring the Vaishnavite varnish over the earlier version.

The second complete version is known as *Śrīrāma-Kīrtana* by Hridayananda Kayastha alias Ananta Ata (17th century). The work was completed in the Sakabda 1577 (A.D. 1655) and is intended for use in congregational prayer and recitation. Each chapter begins with a refrain followed by narrative verses. The leader of the prayer-service besides initiating the refrain to be repeated by others, goes on chanting narrative verses and at the end of each verse the refrain is repeated. The work presents a simple and abridged version of the epic devoid of embellishment and descriptive elaboration.

Kāvyas on Epics and Puranic Episodes

Episodical *kāvyas* or *khaṇḍa kāvyas*, based on stories of purāṇas and epics are too numerous to be given a detailed analysis. Narratives and descriptions of these *kāvyas* are partly based on their respective sources but are mainly creations of the poet's own imagination. Although Harivar Vipra of the 14th century initiated this type of episodical *kāvyas*, it was Sankardev who made it a popular form of literary expression in the 16th century. Sankardev composed several such *kāvyas* of which *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*, *Hariścandra-upākhyān*, *Balicalana*, *Amṛtamanthana* and *Kurukṣetra* are noteworthy. Stories including sequence of events and situations are no doubt taken from the *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, but elaboration of situations and characters owe a great deal to the poet's imagination. Of all these works *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* is the most popular and poetically the most successful work. It depicts the abduction of Rukmini, daughter of the Vidarbha King Bhismaka, by Krishna from the marriage pandal when she was about to be betrothed to Sisupala, the King of Chedi. The poet has skilfully interwoven the materials of the *Bhāgavata* and *Harivamśa* with a view to complicating the plot and making it poetically attractive. The importance of the poem lies in its bold characterization, lively dialogues and brilliant description of various scenes. The basic materials of Madhavdev's only poem *Rājasūya* are taken from book X of the *Bhāgavata*, but the details are supplied by his own imagination as well as from the *Sabhāparva* of the Mahabharata. The vivid description of the gorgeous procession led by Krishna from Dvaraka to Indraprastha, the grim fight between Bhima and Jarasandha, Sisupala's vituperation against Krishna in the assembly of kings and sages, the description of the *Rājasūya* sacrifice and the discomfiture of Duryodhana in the crystal hall of the Pandavas express the narrative ability of Madhavdev. Though the poet has not lost sight of the Vaishnavite ideals, his foremost concern appears to be the presentation of the theme at a poetic level. Ananta Kandali also composed a few *kāvyas* of which *Kumāra-haraṇa* depicting the romance of Usha and Aniruddha is the most popular for its treatment of love, humorous situations and fine delineation of characters. In spite of being a Vaishnavite work, he has freely introduced erotic elements in presenting the theme.

Vadha-kāvyas. Besides translating a large part of the great epic Mahabharata, Ram Saraswati is remembered for a series of heroic poems, generally known as *Vadha-kāvyas*, showing the heroic exploits of the Pandavas against oppressive demons and goblins while they spent their days in forest during the period of their exile. The Pandavas, helped by Lord Krishna, ultimately vanquish their adversaries. In a sense, the Pandavas in these poems are allegorical figures representing the distressed souls groping in this world to be ultimately rescued by God for their steadfast devotion. The world in which we move about is nothing but a wild forest infested with ferocious beasts ready to attack us at any moment. We can, however, save ourselves by surrendering to the Lord without reservation. B. Kakati has compared *Vadha-kāvyas* with the medieval romances of Europe. It may be mentioned that the demons and goblins depicted in these poems are nothing but the embodiment of vices while the Pandavas are represented as symbols of virtue and devotion. Ram Saraswati himself composed more than a dozen such poems and later poets added a few more. These poems though declared as parts of *Vanaparva* are actually independent poems having little connection with the stories and narratives of the epic. Of all the *Va-*

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kāvyas the story of *Aśvakarṇavadha* is the most fascinating. It runs thus: Bhima and Arjuna while roaming in the forest in search of wild fruits discovered a beautiful maiden at the bottom of a deep well crying for help. Bhima was at first unwilling to lend their help as he suspected the motive of the girl, but Arjuna, chivalrous by nature, prevailed upon his brother and they lowered one end of their bow deep into the well to draw out the maiden from the well. But to their utter surprise they could not withstand the pull of the girl and were dragged into the nether region where through a series of encounters with demons led by Asvakarna they finally succeeded in rescuing the girl Hemasundari by restoring the throne to her father, the legitimate king. The two brothers were considerably helped by Siva whose favour Hemasundari enjoyed. The *kāvya* ends with the marriage of Hemasundari and Arjuna. Another popular work is *Bhima-carita*, a light humorous poem describing Bhima's juvenile exploits and escapades. But tagged to Bhima's exploits we find the stricken conjugal life of Siva and Parvati who keep Bhima as their cowherd. The work truly reflects the agricultural life of the people who find it difficult to make both ends meet. Siva here is depicted as an agriculturist addicted to ganja and quite indifferent to worldly needs.

Secular Poems

During the decadent period (1700–1826) Assamese literature, though reduced in depth and originality, gained sufficient breadth due to the development of its secular and utilitarian aspects. Several poems with a thin veneer of religious didacticism were composed where the poets seem to be more concerned in telling stories than preaching religious ideals. *Śakuntalā* and *Mādhava-Sulocanā* may be taken as representatives of this type of poem. The bare skeleton of *Śakuntalā* is taken from the *Sabhāparva*, but it has been considerably remodelled by materials from the drama of Kalidasa. The work containing eleven hundred and odd verses is more secular than religious in tone. The introduction of the ring episode, the curse of Durvasa and the part played by the hermit girls Anasuya and Priyamvada are definitely from Kalidas's work. The part played by Menaka in uniting and reuniting the lovers through the good offices of the two friends in the guise of *svairindhrī* is the creation of the Assamese poet. Again, the interposition of the story of Kāmakalā and Candraketu, itself is an independent *kāvya*. The erotic descriptions and the influence of different seasons on the two pairs of separated lovers (Sakuntala-Dusyanta, Kāmakalā-Candraketu) are inventions of the poet. The romance of Madhava and Sulochana and their vicissitude has been narrated separately by no less than three Assamese poets. The germ of this romance is found in the Kriya-yogasāra section of the *Padmapurāṇa*. Assamese poets have given it new flesh and blood by investing the story with secular modifications.

Mṛgāvati-carita and *Madhumālati* are Assamese adaptations of two Sufi *kāvyas* written by Kutvan and Manjhan respectively. The Islamic or Sufi garb has been replaced by a thin Vaishnavite veneer to make them acceptable to Assamese readers. The language and style of these works establish them as works of the 18th century.

Lyrics

During the pre-Sankardev period, lyrics set to classical melodies were composed as integral parts of the *pāñcāli kāvya*, but Sankardev introduced a distinct type of musical compositions which were characterized by sublime thought and spiritual idealism. This type of musical composition tuned to classical *rāgas* is known as *Bargīta* (noble song). These songs in contrast to those of the *pāñcāli* poets of the earlier period are free from mundane desire or secular urges and raise the listeners to a level of experience where art and religion mingle to produce a state of spiritual ecstasy. Futility of worldly desires, the transience of life, the agony of the seeking self and the desirability of taking refuge at the compassionate feet of God are the main traits of *Bargīta*. A large part of the *Bargītas*, however, deals with the sports, pranks and naughtiness of the child Krishna through whom the character of the eternal child under the doting care of his mother is vividly portrayed. According to tradition Sankardev composed twelve score songs, but only about forty have survived. Madhavdev following his guru also composed an equal number of *Bargītas* of which nearly 180 are now available. Following them many of the later Vaishnavite poets composed lyrics, the total number of which would exceed one thousand. Some of these have been printed. According to the tradition current amongst the Vaishnavas, *Bargītas* are classified under several categories: (i) *paramārtha-gīta* (songs of spiritual significance), (ii) *virakti-gīta* (songs of detachment), (iii) *viraha-gīta* (songs of agony of separation from the Lord and Krishna), (iv) *jāgaraṇa-gīta* (songs of awakening Krishna in the morning), (v) *calana-gīta* (songs of movement to Vrindavana to tend cows), (vi) *khelana-gīta* (depicting sports of Krishna) and (vii) *cauracāturi-gīta* (depicting Krishna stealing milk and butter and his naughty behaviour with the milkmaids). The lyrics of Madhavdev present a lovely portrait of a vivacious child in Krishna, with the sympathy of a close observer of the child, his psychology and activities. Sankardeva's songs are surcharged with spiritual longing and worldly detachment. In elegance, softness and musical quality as well as in point of sentiment the *Bargītas* could be favourably compared with the lyrics of Surdas, Tukaram some of the Alvars of Tamilnadu.

Two specimens of the *Bargīta* are given below in translation to present an idea of its nature. The one quoted below is a specimen of *virakti* song by Sankardev:

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Falling prostrate at Thy feet, O Lord.
I beseech Thee that Thou would preserve my soul.
My life has been infected with the venom—
Of the serpent of worldliness.
I can no longer stand the strain of life.
Wealth and family are illusory,
So are life, youth and this world of ours.
Wife and children are all unsubstantial.
On whom or what shall I place reliance?
My mind is as fickle as water on a lotus leaf
And never at rest at any moment,
Immersed in wordly pleasures,
I feel no direct touch of Thy supreme feet,
Sankara says: O Hrisikesa,
Steer me safe across the sea of sorrow.
O Sripati, Thou art my goal and destiny,
Grant me knowledge and show—
Me the path of spiritual progress.

(tr. by B. K. Barua)

The second specimen representing a *jāgaraṇa-gīta* by Madhavdev is reproduced in prose translation:

O consort of Kamala, give up your morning sleep; let me see your moon-like face. The night has vanished, the four quarters are clear and the sun's rays have appeared tearing asunder the veil of darkness. Hundred-petalled lotuses (*śatapatra*) are in full bloom with black bees hovering over them. The milkmaids of Braja are churning milk singing your glory. Dama and Sudama are calling you.

Behold, Balaram too has come out of the sleeping chamber. Nanda has left for the cattle-pen and the milkmen had gone to the herds.

Awake and arise, therefore, O Gopala, and go for tending cows. Taking pails of milk and butter as well as your horn, stick and flute, release the calves and the lowing cows early. Madhava says—O mother Yasoda, what penance did you practise as to get the Lord of the three worlds as your cowherd boy. (tr.)

During the succeeding period the volume of lyrics greatly increased but the majority of them are imitative productions. Nevertheless, some fine lyrics were composed by Mohunts of Dihing (Mohunt from the Sanskrit *Mahat* means the head of a religious institution), Ahataguri and Mayamara sattras during the latter part of the 17th century.

Biographical Literature

A new type of literature in the shape of metrical biographies originated in the first half of the 17th century. Immediately after the demise of the first two gurus of the Vaishnavite sect, the followers considered it a sacred duty to listen to the accounts of the life and activities of the early gurus and this practice ultimately paved the way for the growth of biographical literature. These biographies, rather hagiographies, dealing with lives and religious activities of the Vaishnavite saints and preachers shed considerable light on individual saints and also afford us a fair glimpse of the social, religious and political conditions of Assam during the later medieval period. These biographies known as *Caritras*, written from the religious point of view depict the subjects with great reverance and admiration. Human frailties and weaknesses are scrupulously avoided to focus on spiritual strength and religious faith. Sometimes human and superhuman elements are juxtaposed to draw attention to the extraordinary qualities of the depicted persons. But in spite of the sprinkling of supernatural element and predominating sense of hero-worship, the biographies have recorded detailed account, sometimes in poetical verse of the activities and experiences of successive religious saints and preachers in the ontext of the Vaishnava movement.

All the notable religious saints of the Vaishnava community have been treated elaborately in more than one biography. For instance, there are no less than half-a-dozen biographies dealing with the life and activities of Sankardev. Similarly three biographies have been written on the life of Damodardev. Ramcharan Thakur, Daityari Thakur, Dvija Bhushana, Ramānanda, Ram Ray, Nilakantha Dasa, Jayanarayan, Ramānanda Dvija, Bhadracharu Dasa, and many others have contributed to the expansion of the biographical literature in Assamese. The number of metrical biographies is more numerous than prose works. (Read article on Biographical Writings.)

Śākta Literature

Though Assam is considered one of the main centres of *Śakti* worship, literature on Saktism is not as extensive as the Vaishnavite one. In the earlier part of this discussion it has been noted that the goddess Manasa being an aspect of Sakti became an object of worship and a distinct literature known as *Manasā-purāṇa* consequently emerged. During the Vaishnavite period the most important and popular work on this subject was *Padmā-purāṇa* by Sukavinarayana (17th century) composed in *pāñcāli* style. It is a voluminous work mirroring medieval Assamese society in its many facets and shining in occasional flashes of poetic beauty. The *Mārkaṇḍēya Caṇḍī* or *Durgā-saptáśatī* was translated into Assamese verse by two poets of the 18th century. *Saundaryalahari* by Sankaracharya was also translated by Ananta Acharya in the same century. The total output of Śakta literature is meagre in comparison with the Vaishnava literature.

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Compendia, Anthology and Miscellaneous Works

During the Vaishnavite period some devotional compendia were prepared on the basis of puranic episodes for use in prayers and recitations. A few of them bear the stamp of a masterly hand capable of expressing contents with utmost brevity without reducing poetic appeal. Of such works the most important one is no doubt *Kīrtana-Ghoṣā* by Sankardev, probably composed during the first phase of his religiour career. The work consisting of 27 sections, each section being independent, is meant to be sung in individual or congregational prayer services. Each section dealing with an episode of the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* (excepting a few othes sources) partakes of the nature of an independent *khaṇḍa-kāvya*. Although the main emphasis is on devotional elements the poet has not failed to make each section as presentable as possible by drawing lively characters and situations by rhythmic felicity of expression within a limited space. Sankardev's another small but impressive work is *Guṇmālā* where the entire 10th and 11th cantos of the *Bhāgavata* have been summarised in the jingling verse of the six syllabic metre within some hundred verses covering about twenty-five pages in print. Similar gists of the *Bhāgavata* are *Bhāgavata-ratna* and *Bhāgavata-sūtra* by Vishnu Bharati and Bhāgavatācārya respectively. Madhavdev's *Nāmghoṣā*, part translation and part original, consisting of one thousand verses is held in the highest regard by the Vaishnavites for its devotional profundity and literary smoothness. It dwells on the cardinal principles of Assam Vaishnavism. The Sanskrit devotional anthologies like *Bhaktiratnāvali* by Vishnupuri, *Bhakti-ratnākara* by Sankardev were rendered into Assamese verse for the benefit of the masses. A metrical summary of the *Gītā* adapted for daily prayer service was also made under the tittle *Gītā-kīrtana* by Ratnakar Misra in the 17th century. An elaborate metrical version of the *Gītā* was made available to the people by Govinda Misra in the same century.

Conclusion

The entire traditional poetry, being religion-oriented is predominated by the consideration of liberty from the bondage of the world and attainment of eternal bliss. The world depicted in this literature is peopled by gods, demons, supermen, kings and nobles. Mundane love, jealousy, hatred, joy and sorrow, hope and aspiration have not been divorced, but these are mostly shown as ephemeral in contrast to the eternal bliss conferred upon the devotees by the loving God. The common man, ordinary drawers of water and hewers of wood are sometimes introduced to point a moral, but not to adorn a tale. Naturally, therefore, aspiration and hope, joy and bereavement of the people belonging to the common rung of the society are not adequately reflected in the traditional poetry. Even then it goes to the credit of the poets that whenever and wherever an opportunity occurs they have not failed to notice the changing variegated beauty of nature and its perceptible or imperceptible influence on the nature and psychology of man. Different types of characters with different shades and nuances have also found expression in their poetry. All the *rasas* enumerated by the classical aestheticians have been adequately represented in our traditional poetry within its own limitations.

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Bengali

KHUDIRAM DAS

The Early Poetry

Forty-six mystic poems or songs composed by Mahāyāna Buddhist scholars of the period around A.D.1000 are the earliest examples available of Bengali poetry. Kānhapāda or Kṛṣṇācārya, Bhusukpāda, Śāntipāda, Sarahapāda, Śabarapāda, Kāmalipāda and Kukkurīpāda (all 10th–11th century) were some of the 22 poets who composed these poems. They lived in the monasteries of North Bengal and Bihar and were known as far as Tibet and Nepal.

These songs, symbolic and esoteric in nature, were meant primarily for the initiates of Tantric Buddhism, but fortunately they have, while illustrating those symbols, left for later generations instances of literary insight and descriptions of riverine Bengal, of rowing, hunting, love-making, stage acting, marriage and of trades like boat-making, spinning or the building of houses. These songs, called *caryāpadas* or *caryāgītis* (*caryā* songs, 10th–11th century), are mostly of five couplets, each rhyming at the end. They employ a variety of the *Prākṛta Mātrāvṛtta* metre in which the long and short syllables are freely placed in a line of 16 or sometimes 26 morae. Here are some examples of the poems in translation:

(i) My beloved of the ḍoma-caste! Your hut is in the outskirts of the town and you touch stupid Brahmins going along the streets. My desire is to be with you alone, dear one; let me ask you frankly, in whose boat do you come and go? You sell strings of entrails and slit bamboo baskets. For you have I thrown off all social vanity.

(ii) Lofty mountains are the abode of *śabara* girls dressed up with peacock feathers on their heads, and necklaces of *Gunjā* seeds. O *Śabara*, my dear mad lover, I beseech you, make no fun. Am I not your wife, the beautiful *sahaja girl*? Look the trees are in flower, raising high their branches.

These poems are the linguistic documents of the oldest form of Bengali. They give an idea of the Tantric Buddhist or the *Sahaja* cult prevailing at the time, furnish a picture of caste-ridden Bengali society and provide clues to the symbolic expressions of the later *Sahajiya* sects. They also help trace the origin of the traditional Bengali *payār* (rhymed couplet) or *tripadī* metres.

Tantric Buddhism, however, was on its way out in the mainland and was to take shelter on the Tibetan heights. Meanwhile, the political picture was also changing. Th Sena kings who succeeded the Buddhist ones were original Hindu chiefs of Karnataka. Ballāl Sen (1158–79) en couraged Brahmin aristocracy. Lakṣmaṇ Sen (12 century) in addition patronized Sanskrit poets, mo prominent of whom was Jayadeva (12th century) of Gīta *govinda* fame. Apart from composing *ślokas* in Sanskr Jayadeva, with his lyrical genius, turned the tide of de generated Buddhism and established the erotic-myst Krishna-Radha cult as the favourite topic of lyric poets f centuries to come. *Gītagovinda* (end of 12th century) perha originally composed in a mixed style of Sanskrit an *Apabhraṁśa* with *Apabhraṁśa* metrics having a super alliterative quality of the lines, is a unique production of it kind. With its romantic delineation of all aspects o love, it remains a fine lyric treasure of Bengal even in th modern period. To the Vaishnavas of the medieval perio however, *Gītagovinda* came as a new religious experien with the prominence of Radha as the supreme worship of Krishna through love.

The name of Radha, Krishna's dearest Gopi, is not to b found in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* or in the famous Ādi Bhakti lyrics. Her name appears in a few *Prākṛta* an Sanskrit secular compositions and in one or two places Līlāśuka's (11th century) *Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta* (c. 1100) fro which Jayadeva probably drew his inspiration. His occasion stay at the Jagannatha Temple at Puri might have h something to do with his novel attempt. Whatever be t source, Jayadeva's *Gītagovinda* succeeded in rousing th latent romantic feelings of the people and in sustaining th great lyric poets Chandidas (Caṇḍidās, 15th century) i Bengal and Vidyapati (Vidyāpati, 15th century) in Mithi These two poets, particularly Chandidas, were also respo sible for forging a link between the upper and the low classes.

Chandidas or rather Badu Chandidas (Baḍu is a young married Brahmin) composed *Śrikṛṣṇa-Kīrtan* around 11 This long narrative poem has abundant lyrical qual and possesses a maturity of language and metre. Th the first *Kṛṣṇa-līla* poem in Bengali. It describes the pha of Radha's love for Krishna, from primary indifference, s she was already married to Abhimanyu, through all other stages. Badu Chandidas' plan is so original execution so skilful that Bengal Vaishnavism after Chait began to consider a *parakīyā* relationship (love for an ready married woman) as the most important facto divine love.

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The discovery of the manuscript of *Śrīkṛṣṇa-Kīrtan* in 1911, by Basantaranjan Ray, created a stir in both the literary and religious circles. The poem revealed itself as a narrative with dramatic elements and lyrical qualities in it. It delineates the gradual psychological changes in Radha's heart from apathy to a fully grown love. The character of Baḍāi, the aged go-between, is also well drawn. The lyrical quality of several poems in it reminds the reader of the poet's later *padas*, which were thought, before the discovery of the long manuscript, to be his only compositions. Chandidas is still very much a living poet in Bengal, and his ability to translate in common language the deepest pathos of a woman-in-love is still considered unparalleled. Here is a dialogue in verse in which Krishna teases Radha, knowing well that she is none else but his own consort in a previous birth:

K: Your grace and beauty has made me restless ever since I met you, and my heart breaks.
R: One should drown oneself in such a plight with a stone hanging from his neck.
K: But only you are my Ganga and Bārānasī where I can find rest; in you are all my shrines and holy places.
R: Shame to you that you dare talk like that to your own maternal aunt.
K: I am the lord of all the gods, and you are my spouse. It is useless to draw other relationships.
R: Such claims make you feel good, isn't it? Only a daring burglar breaks thus into another man's home.
K: Right you are, you have exactly said what my mind desires. (tr.)

Here are some other lines that bring out Radha's pangs of *Pūrvarāga* (the dawning of love) after she has completely surrendered to the magic flute of Krishna:

O Baḍāi, who is he who thus plays the flute on Kāḷindī's bank, and in the fields of *Gokula*? My body thrills, my mind is restless, my cooking goes wrong.
Tell me Baḍāi, who he is, and I could ever serve him as his bondmaid.
Blissfully he plays his flute, but what offence have I given him I do not know.
Tears roll down my eyes, I have lost my heart to that music.
Isn't he Nanda's son, but does he flute to captivate me alone?
Alas, I am no bird to fly to him.
Open up, Mother Earth, let me enter you and escape.
Listen Baḍāi, everybody can see when a forest is on fire.
But my heart burns within like a potter's closed oven.
(tr.)

The poet's mature compositions are in a markedly different style, as the following example will show. Mere utterance of the name of Krishna by a friend affects Radha profoundly, and she laments:

Ah, who thus tells me Śyāmā's name?
Through the ears it descends to the
depth of my being, and moves my soul.
Who can measure the melody of Śyāmā's name
which the mouth cannot stop repeating?
The utterance of the name over and over again
benumbs my senses.
How can I ever reach him, my friend? (tr.)

Vidyapati, probably a later contemporary of Chandidas, and an equally fine lyric poet, prefers more ornate language for his *Kṛṣṇa-līla* poems. If Chandidas is considered a poet of imaginative sorrow, Vidyapati is generally regarded as a poet of hope and joy. But here is a sad (*māthura*) poem by Vidyapati, who was a master of sentiment and style:

My friend, who knows if Mādhava would ever come back?
I see no hope that this gulf of separation
could ever be crossed.
A whole day passed while expecting him by the hour,
Months went by while I counted only the days.
The months have now yielded to years, and all
desire for love and life is now gone.
Travellers return with the rains,
but my seasons come and go fruitless.
When the cold moon kills the lotus bloom,
What can the spring-time bestow?
If the sun blights the young shoots,
What can the rains redeem?
What can late love bring if youth droops in separation?
(tr.)

Translated Poems

Early medieval Bengali literature is rich in translations from the classical Ramayana and Bhagavata Purana. This period also witnessed the composing of the so-called *Maṅgala Kāvyas* (Mangala poems) based on folk-worship and legends connected with the unconventional deities. During the same period were born the Gopīcānd-Maynāmati legends, mostly in extempore poetry, in the north-eastern and south-eastern fringes of Bengal.

It should be noted that pre-modern Bengali literature meant all poetry, most of which, again, was put to music by groups of singers who divided and subdivided the main episode of the narrative poem for convenient performance or for *rasa*. Each such episode was meant to be sung during a whole night or day, and thus the singing of an entire poem continued for days together.

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When Krittibas (Kṛttibās, 15th century) composed his seven-canto Bengali Ramayana in traditional *payār* and *tripadī* metres, possibly he had in mind *pāñcāli*, an old mode of song-performance by five singers. In *pāñcāli*, which became a very popular way of singing long narratives like the Ramayana or the *Maṅgala* poems, the four assistants of the principal singer only repeat the refrain. Krittibas' translation is not entirely faithful to the Sanskrit original, probably because he wanted to present a Ramayana that would be joyfully accepted by one and all. His Rama is a soft and loving Bengali youth as well as an incarnation of Narayana who is bountiful even to an enemy. His Sita represents the ideal Bengali bride. As for Hanuman, he is a pure and simple *Bhakta*. Incidents can also be found in this Ramayana which are not there in the original. Krittibas' Valmiki is shown originally as a robber, Ratnākar, as one who turns into a great poet through the influence of Rama's name. Taraṇisen, Mahirāvaṇa and others gladly seek death from Rama's arrows. And Rama propitiates the goddess Caṇḍi before his final encounter with Ravana. It may be that some of these episodes were actually later interpolations made by other singers to please their audience. But considering the total structure of his Ramayana, it can safely be conjectured that Krittibas himself introduced some innovations in the story, as Tulasidas did in Hindi.

Krittibas treated the character of Ravana, Mandodari and Indrajit in his own way. The death of his Indrajit is intended to bring tears. His Ravana is a great king well versed in the *Nīties* (Laws), so much so that before Ravana's death Rama himself goes to him for initiation in royal diplomacy. It is not unlikely that Michael Madhusudan Dutt in the 19th century was influenced by Krittibas in treating Ravana and Indrajit with great admiration. Krittibas wrote in a simple folk-style, which earned for him great popularity. Colophons in one or two manuscripts suggest that he was patronised by a Sultan whose court was adorned by highly placed Hindu officials and scholars.

The exact date of composition of the first Bengali Ramayana is difficult to decide. But we are sure of the date of the first translation of the *Kṛṣṇa-līla* portion of the Bhagavata. It was called *Śrīkṛṣṇa Vijay* (1480) and was by Maladhar Basu (2nd half of the 15th century). The translator's patron was Ruknuddin Barbak Sah, Sultan of Gauḍ from 1459 to 1475. *Śrīkṛṣṇa Vijay* was greatly admired by Chaitanya himself.

The end of the 15th century also witnessed the spread of two full-fledged *Manasā* (the Snake Goddess) poems, which had the legend of Behula and Lakhindar integrated in them. From the beginning of the early 16th century, there were, in medieval traditional poetry, three distinct trends which continued till the end of the 18th century. These were: (i) The *Maṅgal Kāvyas*, celebrating such deities as Manasā, Daḍm (the deity presiding over wealth and kingdom, later integrated with Durga and Kālikā), Dharma (or, rather, Dadm, who bestows progeny and cures leprosy), and Siva-Parvati (with both Puranic and folk legends). The songs about Maynāmatī and Gopichand also fall into this category; (ii) a group of poetry that includes the Vaishnava religious lyrics and some biographies; and (iii) a group consisting of translations either from the Sanskrit such as Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavata, or from foreign sources, which had been introduced by Muslim patrons and Muslim poets. Some secular ballads formed a separate category altogether.

The Maṅgal Poems

In a *Maṅgal* poem the poet begins with invocations, first to Ganapati, then to the Goddess of Learning, and then to the deity to be eulogized. After this follows a summary of ancient matters connected with the Puranas, mainly the Siva-Parvati episode mixed with folk traditions. The deity being eulogized then curses some young god and his wife, or a heavenly nymph, and makes them assume mortal form to help propagate worship of the particular deity being sung about. Here ends the *Deva-khāṇḍa* (the heavenly portion) and what follows is the 'human portion' or the real poem. The cursed gods are shown leading a hard life, in both union and separation. The long poem finally ends happily with the worship of the particular deity accepted by all. As a matter of tradition, each real *Maṅgal* poem should also include a *Bāramāsiya* (enumeration of all the twelve months of grief of the heroine) and the *Cautisā* (adoration of the deity in thirty-four alphabets). The *Caṇḍi-Maṅgal* poems generally strictly adhere to this tradition. In both the *Caṇḍī* and *Manasā* poems, the hero's mother is shown as an already converted devotee of the deity concerned. The hero's father, on the other hand, owes allegiance to the older god Siva and defies the new deity. The *Manasā Maṅgal* poets utilize this opportunity to present a brave and stubborn character, an upholder of principles, who is undaunted by pressure or calamity.

The human portion of the story in the *Manasā-Maṅgal* poems tells of the merchant Cāṅd, who is an ardent devotee of Siva, but whose wife Sanakā worships a new goddess *Manasā*. Before Cāṅd sets out with his merchant fleet, he kicks the sacred pots of *Manasā* and shatters them to show his disrespect. *Manasā* retaliates by drowning his six sons and their merchandise in the sea. Cāṅd is spared because he must be persuaded to be her devotee, as ordained. He suffers great misery and humiliation, but remains firm in his determination not to worship 'the flat-headed and one-eyed hateful goddess'. Time passes and to Cāṅd, another son, Lakhāi or Lakhindar, is born. When Lakhāi grows up, his father arranges for his marriage with Behulā, a good-looking dancing girl born devotee of *Manasā*. The scheming deity now causes Lakhāi to die of snake-bite on the second night of

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marriage. While Cāṅd, the sceptic, laughs and dances with the snake-killing club on his shoulder, Sanakā, the boy's mother, laments loudly and accuses Behulā of being a most unlucky girl.

Lamenting and weeping bitterly Sanakā started to rebuke Behulā.
The vermilion mark is still red in the parting of your hair.
Your bridal garment is still spotless.
You luckless girl with gaps in your teeth,
You have gobbled up your spouse before the wedding night has ended.

Behulā decides to take the body to *Manasā* and get it revived. She places the body on a banana-raft and, deaf to all entreaties, sails for an unknown destination. Thus begins the greatest trial of a woman's life.

The rest of the story, known as *Bhāsān pālā* (The Voyage), is the best part of this *Manasā* poem. It shows the extreme limits of a woman's suffering for love. Numerous poets and singers have dwelt on the pathos of the situation. Ignoring all threats and temptations, she continues her voyage with the decomposing body of Lakhāi on her lap, and finally reaches the city of the gods. There she enchants Siva-Parvati and *Manasā* (who is supposed to be their daughter) with her dancing, and succeeds in getting them to bring back to life her husband. Back home, Behulā still finds it difficult to persuade the great merchant to pay homage to the goddess *Manasā*. When Cānd finally yields, he carelessly throws only a flower with his left hand to the deity whom he hated so much. It is made clear that Cānd surrenders only to the entreaties of his family and not to destiny.

The earliest authors of the *Maṅgal* poems are Vijay Gupta of Bariśāl (now in Bangladesh) and Vipradas of West Bengal, both of whom lived towards the end of the 15th century when Hossain Shah was the Sultan of Bengal. Both wrote in elegant Bengali and while Vijay Gupta excelled in characterization, Vipradas was meticulous about details of localities and society. The *Manasā* poems were very popular in East Bengal (now Bangladesh), where worship of the snake-goddess prevailed. A large number of *Maṅgal* poets are from this region. The 16th-century poet Narayanadev, once popular as 'Sukavi', composed in the simple dialect of East Bengal, emphasizing the sentiments. Dvija Vamśīdās of south-east Bengal and his daughter Candrāvatī, who composed some portions of a Bengali Ramayana, collaborated on several *Manasā* songs in the 17th century. Among the North Bengal poets in this tradition, Jagajjivan Ghosal (17th century) and Jivan-krishna Maitra (18th century) are noteworthy for the topographical and social accounts of the villages of North Bengal that one finds in their work. But of all the later poets, Ketakadas Kshemananda's compositions are perhaps the best. He was a poet of the mid-17th century and wrote an elegant and precise diction. In his poetry he describes his personal ordeals after the death of his patron Bārā Khān in a quarrel with a Mughal administrator.

The *Manasā Maṅgal* poems, incidentally, are also occasionally called *Padmā-purāṇa*.

Compared to the *Manasā* poems, those called *Caṇḍī Maṅgal* generally show greater literary merit and higher social value. This is due to the genius of that remarkable poet Mukunda Chakravarti (late 16th century, honoured by the title Kavikaṅkaṇ).

Unlike the *Manasā* poems, the *Caṇḍī* poems have not one but two distinct episodes in the 'human' part. The first deals with the spread of the cult among the lower caste people, the second with its spread in the higher merchant class. The wife and son of the merchant are shown as born-devotees of Caṇḍī, while the merchant himself worships Siva and is opposed to the new goddess. It would appear that Caṇḍī, like Manasā, was originally a goddess of the tribal people and entered into the Hindu puranic pantheon with the Hinduization of the non-Aryans.

The legend of Kālketu, the hunter, as found in Caṇḍī poems is quite original. In their previous birth the hunter and his wife Phullarā were gods. In their human incarnation they are humble untouchables; they remain loving and faithful to each other. Kālketu hunts in the forest and Phullarā sells the meat and animal skins. Caṇḍī, intending to introduce herself on earth through Kālketu, plays a trick one day. She lies in Kālketu's path in the guise of a big lizard (*godhikā*). Kālketu takes this to be an inauspicious sign. Unable to secure any other prey, he returns home with the big lizard tied to his bow. Caṇḍī meanwhile changes her guise and becomes a beautiful woman. Phullarā, when she returns from the market, is amazed to find a beautiful woman waiting in her hut. She questions Caṇḍī, who fond of humour and desirous of making the most of the situation, gives dubious answers. Phullarā is astonished to learn that Caṇḍī wants to stay with them, as Kālketu's second wife. This is the greatest ordeal of Phullarā's life. She first entreats Caṇḍī to go back to her own husband, then tries to dissuade her by quoting moral principles. Failing to move the intruder she begins a lament in which she describes the twelve-month long grief that is her lot (*Bāramāsiyā*). The poets of *Caṇḍī-Maṅgal* generally exhaust their poetic skill on this topic of *Bāramāsiyā*, as may be seen in Mukunda's *Bāramāsiyā* of Phullarā, from which these excerpts are taken:

Grief of Āṣāḍh (*June–July*)
Earth fills with rain water falling from fresh clouds.
Even big people find their resources used up
before long.
With the basket of meat, I turn from door to door,
and return with some broken rice
too small for a meal.

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Fair lady, look where we live, look, it is
flooded even with no rains around.

Grief of Kārtik (*October–November*)
Cold is born with the month of *Kārtik*,
and people are busy fighting the chill.
God has granted clothes for all, luckless
Phullarā can only put on a deer-skin.
What more can the body endure, O what more?
Sitting awake with nothing to cover me,
I let the night pass.

Grief of Spring
The wind blows soft in the sweet month of Spring.
The honeybees suck honey from malati flowers.
Madan burns the bodies of other men and women.
My body burns in the flames only of an empty belly.
Oh my grim destiny, O my grim destiny,
Full twice sixteen miles separate us though
I sleep next to my husband.

Caṇḍī remains unmoved even by this tragic narration. She continues her joke by saying, 'Your husband has brought me to this place by tying me with his *guṇa* (punning on a word which may mean either "quality" or a "bow-string"); go and ask him if he has not done so.' Phullarā, bitterly weeping all the way, goes to the market place to find Kālketu. Then follows, in Kavikaṅkaṇ, this dailogue in verse:

The husband begins:
Why are the eyes so scarlet, dear? With whom did you quarrel? You have no mother-in-law or sisters-in-law or a second wife of your husband at home.

Replies Phullarā:
It is not the question of a second wife at home,
you yourself have acted like one.
The providence must have turned against me.
But ants grow wings only before their death.
May I ask, whose daughter of sixteen have
you brought home?
What made you to take to vices my brave?
You are from this day the Ravana of Lanka fame.
Don't forget that Kalinga's rogue king
waits his turn.
Surely he will now strike you dead and debauch me.

And Kālketu angrily shouts:
Be precise, woman, and tell me what you mean.
Lie and I'll chip your nose with this chopper.

Phullarā then weeps:
In the matter of truth or falsehood, virtue is
surely on my side.
As for her, go and see her like a three-night
old crescent moon, firmly installed before our door.

Reaching his hut Kālketu is stunned by the woman he sees there and at once falls on his knees. He pleads with the strange woman to go back to her husband, puts forth reasons and cites instances of sacred love. When she refuses to move, Kālketu lifts his bow and aims an arrow at her. But, alas, his limbs become paralyzed and he can neither shoot the arrow, nor put his bow down. Phullarā tries to remove the bow and arrow from his hands, but she too fails. The goddess then reveals herself, tells them who she is and blesses the couple. Kālketu receives from her a golden ring, gems worth seven crores of rupees, and another seven pitchers full of money. Caṇḍī asks him not to kill innocent creatures of the forest any more, and commands him to set up a small kingdom called Gujurat and to initiate there the worship of Caṇḍī. This is how her cult is supposed to have spread among the lowly people.

The conversion of the upper class starts with the merchant Dhanapati who had two wives. The younger one, Khullanā (heavenly nymph reborn on earth), is a devotee of Caṇḍī. Lahanā, the older, has kept her in misery. But her husband loves her, and when he is on a voyage, a son is born to her whom she calls Śrīmanta. The rest of the story describes Dhanapati's adventures in distant Simhala (Sri Lanka). He has a vision of a miracle in the ocean: it is of a goddess of surprising beauty (*Kamale Kāminī*) sitting on a lotus. She sucks in a whole elephant and brings it out the next moment. The King of Simhala is sceptical when the vision is described to him, and the merchant is put into prison. Śrīmanta, when he comes of age, goes in search of his father. He convinces the King of Simhala, through the grace of Caṇḍī, of the existence of Kamale Kāminī, and frees his father from bondage. Srimanta then marries the king's daughter and they return home to worship Caṇḍī. The union of father and son is depicted by the poets with deep emotion.

Poet Mukunda Chakravarti, the best narrative poet of medieval Bengal, is the first important poet to write of the Caṇḍī-cult. This cult, however, was old before his time and it may be surmised that earlier poets had composed poems in at least the 15th and 16th centuries about the two episodes. Mukunda himself, writing, in about 1600, refers to a poet named Māṇik Datta who had composed on Caṇḍī before him. But unfortunately such compositions have been lost.

Poet Mukunda is memorable for his literary skill. He has integrated in his work his full experience of the society he lived in, the caste-ridden Hindu one and the divided Muslim one. He writes of the occupations of the people, of the landlords and the conditions in small feudal states. His sympathy for the humblest and poorest is reflected in his verses. His talent for characterization is best seen in Phullarā, a model Bengali wife. His creation of a delightful rogue in Bhāṇḍudatta has been praised by all.

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In his autobiography Mukunda gives his reasons for composing the *Caṇḍī-Maṅgal* poem. For historical reasons connected with revenue-and-land reforms during Akbar's reign, the poet had to leave his agricultural lands and homestead. With his wife and children he left his home and travelled over a hundred miles. Exhausted and hungry, they lay resting one day by the side of a large tank, when Caṇḍī, in the guise of his mother, appeared to him in a dream and asked him to compose a *Maṅgal* poem in her honour. The result has remained a marvel of medieval poetic creation.

There were two notable poets of the Caṇḍī-cult after Kavikaṅkaṇ. They were Dvija Madhav and Dvija Ramadev, who lived in the south-eastern part of Bengal in the mid-17th century. They developed the episodes on slightly different lines. Dvija Madhav is merely a narrator of bare facts, while Ramadev whose poem is called *Abhayā-Maṅgal* has shown good lyrical ability and alliterative sweetness.

A few minor poets such as Dvija Janardan and Akiñcan Cakrabarti composed similar poetry in the 17th and 18th centuries, but by that time the nature of Caṇḍī had been modified to some extent. Caṇḍī had turned into Annapurṅā, or Annadā, and had a softer and more benevolent disposition. The worship of goddess Kāli side by side with Durga (i.e. Caṇḍī) had also become prevalent in the 18th century and so the name of *Kālikā Maṅgal* was also given to such poems. Later, when the secular love episode of 'Vidyā and Sundar' found favour with the administrators and the big landlords, that episode too was included with the Kalika-poems and the erotic story of Vidya-Sundar was given a religious look. It is to be noted that the episodes of *Annadā Maṅgal*, or *Kālikā Maṅgal*, are quite different from those of *Caṇḍī Maṅgal*.

A mid-18th-century poet Bharatchandra Ray (Bhāratcandra Rāy honoured as 'Guṇākar'), was a composer in this tradition and is the next substantial poet of this genre after Kavikaṅkaṇ Mukunda. He is remembered as a witty stylist and one of the finest satirists of early modern times.

A third important trend in *Maṅgal* poetry is the composition about a legendary hero Lāusen. Semi-historical episodes of wars and adventures are also included in these poems. During the reign of the Pala kings in Bengal, the son and wife of Karnasen, a feudal lord, were devotees of Dharma (originally *Daḍm*, a tribal and low-caste deity). Karnasen was employed by the Pala king to subdue a rebellious vassal chief, but failed in his mission and lost his six sons in the battle. Lāusen, his seventh son, was born later. The child grew up, performed several miracles, all by the grace of Dharma and finally defeated his father's vanquisher. The poems about this hero are full of miraculous incidents, though wars and adventures tend to give them an epic character. A noticeable feature of these poems is the depiction of women taking active part in war and exhibiting great courage and high morals.

The Dharma-cult, as well as the composition of poems in honour of Dharma, was confined only to the Rāḍh region of West Bengal. The cult was connected with the lowest strata of the society. One such poem by Manik Gāṅguli begins with the curious statement:

> Jāti Jāy Jadi prabhu ihā kari gān.
> (Though I may lose my caste, O Lord, I must sing of Dharma.)

A fourth category of *Maṅgal* poems deals with the character and activities of Siva, or Siva-Parvati together. In the Bengal of these poems Siva is a near-debauchee beggar or a peasant who is intimate with low-caste women. Parvati or Durga, is a jealous wife who covets riches and quarrels with her husband. But ultimately they make their peace and live as ideal husband and wife. In these poems is found a peculiar mixture of the Puranic with the indigenous elements. The best-known composers of the Śivāyans are Ramakrishna and Ramesvar, the latter being considered superior. Ramesvar, in his attempt to follow Kavikaṅkaṇ, has enriched his poem with pictures of the 18th-century Bengali society, but tends to exaggerate.

In addition to these branches of *Maṅgal* poetry, there were numerous compositions which had other cults as their background. Such poetry included *Gangā Maṅgal*, *Śītalā Maṅgal* (Sitala is the goddess of smallpox), *Kamalā Maṅgal* or the *pāñcāli* of Lakshmi, *Rāy Maṅgal* (Ray, or Dakshina-Ray, is a god who presides over tigers) and *Olā-bibi Maṅgal* (Ola is cholera). But the episodes they narrate are highly concocted and there is little poetic merit in the writing.

More Translations

Krittibas and Maladhar Basu (Mālādhar Basu alias Guṇarāj Khān) have already been mentioned as the first Bengali translators of the Ramayana and Bhagavata respectively, from Sanskrit. The translator of the Ramayana in particular took considerable liberties with the original when writing his version and modified several characters. He was very likely connected with the *Rāmāyet* sect, a pan-Indian religious body of the time, and this may account for the dominating sentiment of *Bhakti* in his version of the Ramayana. These deviations from the original gradually became more prominent in other translations and the *Kṛṣṇa Maṅgal* poems or the translations of the *Bhāgavata* underwent a thorough change after Sri Chaitanya who founded *Rāgātmika* devotion and *Rādhābhāva*.

About 20 other translators of the Ramayana are known, but none rendered Valmiki faithfully. Adbhut Acharya's unorthodox narration of the Ramayana, for instance, shows the transformation of Ratnakar, a cruel bandit, into the poet Valmiki by just the repetition of Rama's name. It also includes a delightful encounter between

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Rama and Siva, and mentions a thousand-headed Ravana who could be killed only by Sita.

Jagatram Ray (Jagatrām Rāy), who lived in the 18th century, composed a very long Ramayana with two extra kāṇḍas (cantos) added to the original seven. His son Ramprasad, who later composed a *Kṛṣṇa-līla* poem, assisted him. Jagatram's Ramayana is also called *Adbhūt Rāmāyaṇ* for its novel episodes in the added *Puṣkara* and *Rāmarās Kāṇḍas*. The poet wanted to establish the identity of Rama with Siva and Krishna and went so far as to imagine Ravana inviting Rama to be the priest in a sacrifice in which he wanted to offer his own life as recompense.

Another poet, Ramananda Yati (18th century), composed the *Rāmatatva Rāmāyaṇ*, combining the Hindi *Tulasi Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Adbhūt Rāmāyaṇa*. A second Ramananda preached Buddhist doctrines in his work, posing as an Avatara of the Buddha. *Rāma-rasāyan* of Raghunandan is based on *Kṛṣṇa-līla* and has the added influence of Tulsidas.

Maladhar Basu (alias Guṇarāj Khān), the first translator of the Bhagavata *Kṛṣṇa-līla*, also adopted parts of the *Harivaṁsa*. Later translators modified their translations according to the new approach of *Bhakti* established by Sri Chaitanya and expounded by scholars of Puri and Vrindavana. Sri Chaitanya himself met one such translator, Raghunath Acharya, and after listening to his exposition of the Bhagavata with tears in his eyes, gave him the title of 'Bhagavata Acharya'. His translation is known as *Kṛṣṇa-prema Taraṅgiṇī*. Madhava Acarya also wrote a *Śrīkṛṣṇa Maṅgal* poem some time after Bhagavata Acharya. His poem contains 'Dānalīla' and 'Naukālīla' sung earlier by Chandidas. The *Kṛṣṇa-līla* poems, enriched by later lyrics, gave rise to the *Jātrā* plays of Bengal.

The first Bengali translation of the Mahabharata was attempted towards the end of the 15th century. Paragal Khan, a commandant of the illustrious Sultan Hussain Shah, was very fond of the Pandava Katha and engaged Paramesvara Das (16th century) to translate the entire story from Sanskrit. Paragal's son Nasrat Khan, popularly called as Choṭe or Chuṭi Khan, also encouraged the poet Srikar Nandi (16th century) to translate the *Aśvamedha parva* of *Jaimini Samhitā*. The poet included many novel episodes in his work with an eye to popular appeal.

Quite a number of poets from northern and western Bengal have translated on popular demand or on instructions from some chief or other, one or two *parvas* (cantos) either from Vyasa or Jaimini or even single episodes such as Nala-Damayanti or Śrīvatsakatha. In East Bengal (now Bangladesh) a Bengali version of the Mahabharata by a poet called Sanjay earned praise from both Hindus and Muslims during the early 16th century.

The Bengali Mahabharata is a poem to be recited and, unlike the Ramayana, was never put to music. As a result it is confined to a limited number of listeners who demand good composition and clear recital. It was Kāśīrām Dās (17th century) who satisfied these conditions more than anybody else. It is a reputation he still enjoys. It is said that he translated only the Adi, Sabha, Vana and some portions of the Virāṭa parvas, while the rest was done by Nandaram, a relation, who closely followed his elegant and precise style. Kasiram Das used a colophon at the end of each episode and this colophon is lovingly remembered even by a child in Bengal:

> Mahābhārater Kathā amṛta samān
> Kāśīrām Das Kahe sune puṇyavān.
> (The tales of the Mahabharata is to be compared to the nectar of heaven. The reciter is Kasiram, the listeners are men of virtue).

The Secular Narratives

The medieval secular narrations are mainly translations. Most of them are from Persian originals which circulated in Mughal court circles, but the translations have been done by Muslims as well as Hindus. The major romantic love tales which were taken up for translation include: (i) the tales of Yusuf and Julekha, (ii) Lor and Chandrani or Sati Maynamati, (iii) Padmavati, (iv) Laila and Majnu, and (v) Vidya and Sundar.

The tragic love story of Yusuf-Julekha was translated into Bengali directly from the Persian source (if not from Firdausi, then from verbal tradition) by, it is believed, Saiyid Md. Sagir, under the patronage of Sultan Giyasuddin, to whom Vidyapati also made some mention. The powerful poet from the group which adorned the courts of the Arakan kings from the early 17th century was Daulat Kazi, who translated the love story of Prince Lor and Chandrani (or, rather, the estranged love between Lor and Mayna, the first wife of Lor), from a Hindi original, which, perhaps, had its source in some folk-episode of south India. Daulat Kazi's language is simple and emotional, but, unfortunately, he could not finish his work before his death. It was Saiyid Ālāol (17th century), the next prolific writer connected with the Arakan court, who completed it.

Ālāol is the best Bengali poet of the 17th century and a perfect master of the art of poetry. He was originally a poet of love, perhaps following the Sufi religious tradition and much influenced by the Radha-Krishna love poems of Chandidas or Jñānadas. But he composed a few Vaishnava lyrics too. The poet experienced many ups and downs in life and even suffered a prison term. Nevertheless, he was able to compose a considerable volume of poetry, including *Padmāvatī*, *Saiful Mulk Badiujjamāl*, *Hapt Paykār* and *Sekendarnāmā*, which are all romantic episodes couched in rich language and versification.

His *Padmāvatī* is a free translation of *Padumāvat*, a Hindi narrative poem by Mālik Muhāmmad Jāysī. It tells of

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love and marriage of Rajput Rana, Bhimsingha of Chitaur, a historical figure, with a fictitious daughter of the King of Simhala, Padmavati. The Sultan of Delhi, Alauddin Khilji, wanted to acquire the lady by force, but he failed, as Padmavati sacrificed herself along with the other Rajput women on the burning pyre. The original semi-historical poem is claimed to be a Sufi allegory. Alaol added to the original, poetic embellishment to suit the Bengali taste. His style is ornate and musical and the composition gives evidence of his deep scholarship in Sanskrit poetics and metrics, philosophy and astronomy, as well as in the new *Rasa* divisions of the Bengali Vaishnavas. *Saiful Mulk* is another romantic love story, based perhaps on a popular modification of an Arabian Nights story. *Hapt Paykār* (Seven Portraits) contains seven stories by the famous Persian poet Nizami, and *Sekendarnāmā*, from the same Persian source, offers stories connected with Alexander the Great.

Another fine narrative poem of the century is *Candrāvatī* by Māgan Ṭhākur (17th century), who was once the patron of Alaol. He refers to himself as belonging to the Quereshi sect. The poem, however, is of Hindu origin and is an allegory of love. The later centuries witnessed more compositions on themes like Yusuf-Julekha, Lor-Chandrani and Laila-Majnu, but poetically they do not rank as high as the works of Alaol or Daulat Kazi.

The most important secular love poem of the period is undoubtedly the *Vidyā-Sundar*, which was received with great interest by Hindus and Muslims alike. The basis of this romantic episode is the *Caurapañcāśikā*, the Sanskrit poem by Vilhana (10th century) which probably came to Bengal through the Muslim adminstrators of Arakan and south-east Bengal. It is not unlikely, however, that there was already another version of *Caurapañcāśikā* current in Bengal. Brahmin Sridhar, a favourite of Prince Firuz Sah, grandson of Hossain Sah, is known to have translated *Vidyā-Sundar* around 1534. Then there is the work of Sabirid Khan, a poet of the Chittagong-Arakan area who knew Sanskrit too. He composed in an elegant, rather ornate Sanskritic Bengali and demonstrated his ability to handle character.

In the 17th and 18th centuries the 'Vidyā-Sundar' tradition was carried to the courts of influential Hindu chiefs. By that time, however, the original secular love episode came to be combined with the miracles of goddess Kalika. So poets like Krishnaram Das and others who composed *Rāy Maṅgal*, then Balaram Kavisekhar and, finally, Bharatchandra Ray Guṇākar and Ramprasad Sen, included the Vidyā-Sundar episode in their writings.

Bharatchandra Ray ('Guṇākar'), the court poet of Krishnachandra of Nadia, is greatly admired for his style of composition and power of characterization. His depiction of Hiramalini, the go-between in the Vidya-Sundar episode, is still considered unique. His brilliant handling of the language and the creation of a modern style from it has drawn much praise from modern critics. To provide an alliterative sweetness to his style, he borrowed about 1200 Persian words in common use, and for metrical novelty he used varieties of Sanskrit or Prakrit forms, but his regard for current dialect and idiom is nevertheless evident at every step. He is also a poet of wit and powerful satire and a critic of imbalances in human character.

The popularity of the 'Vidya-Sundar' poems gave rise to musical *Jātrā* plays on the topic, and these were in vogue in Calcutta even around the middle of the 19th century.

Apart from these translations, there are original compositions by village poets which are fully secular in character. At the beginning of the 20th century, these were collected for the first time from various places in East Bengal and edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen of Calcutta University. Dealing mostly with tragic love and composed in a Bengali dialect, these poems, morethan ten in number, are considered as part of *Loka-Sāhitya* (folk literature).

The Vaishnava Literature

The Vaishnava section of Bengali literature is extensive and its influence wider and deeper than any other section. It also has its characteristic extension in the modern period of Bengali literature.

Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandidas were the precursors of later lyricism as well as of Vaishnavism to a certain extent. It was, however, the advent of Sri Chaitanya (1486–1533) which brought about a revolution in thought and sentiment, and which aroused the latent power of hundreds of Bengali poets by opening up the magic realm of divine love—which is called *Parakīyā Rāgānugā Bhakti* (devotion of a married woman for a man different from her husband).

The Vaishnava literature may be treated under three main subdivisions, viz. (1) *padas* or lyrics, (2) biographies in verse of Chaitanya and other saints and apostles, and (3) a few theological treatises written in verse. Of these, the *padas* containing exquisite poetic beauty and suggestive significances form a major part of the wealth of Bengali literature. The biographies, though they are saturated with *bhakti* and belief in the supernatural, furnish valuable information about the religious movement, and the political and social conditions of the time, apart from the realistic presentation of chosen characters as far as was possible under the circumstances. The theological treatises give readers some idea of the emotional new religion which produced such a wealth of literature.

It is to be remembered that Bengal Vaishnavism, akin to Sufism, is a religion of faith and emotion, and has no other aim except *Kṛṣṇasevā* (the worship of Krishna). The new cult is radically different from the religious cults which produced the *Maṅgal* poems, and even from the earlier variety of Vaishnavism which encouraged emancipation from

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the bondage of *Māyā*. Sri Chaitanya put all the emphasis on the *nāma-kīrtana* (musical repetition of the 'name') and on no other practice for the common people. He decried scholasticism, even knowledge as such, and enjoyed songs and resorted to dancing in ecstasy. This explains the prevalence of lyrics and the Bengali *kīrtana* songs in medieval literature.

The *padas*, the lyrical compositions on Chaitanya's life, first began to appear around 1510, just after his initial emotional outbursts in Nabadwip (Nadia). The composers, Vasudev Ghos, Narahari Sarkar, Govinda Ghos, Vaṁśī-vadan, Ananta, Yadunath and others were his close associates. These poets of the first half of the 16th century, along with the most advanced religious-minded men like Advaita and Nityananda, at once accepted Chaitanya as Krishna himself, reincarnated to found a new religion. Chaitanya had surprised them by his revolt against Brahminism and his close association with, and sympathy for, the low-caste people. He also did not avoid the Muslims. The religious fervour that went with these practices became the inspiration for generations to come. A poet describes Chaitanya thus:

(Behold: our Lord), He weeps for the fallen,
and turns to them his kind eyes.

Brighter than gold, his shining, fair body
repeatedly casting itself on the ground.

For the four castes, for the four disciplines
of life, for the life of wealth or the life
of penury, he admits no fault.

Making no distinctions, he bestows his priceless
love upon the whole of mankind. (tr.)

Chaitanya's associates preferred to call him by his other name, Gora or Gouranga (the one with the fair body). Both Vasudev Ghos and Narahari Sarkar wrote several *padas* about him. Vasudev, whose poems are saturated with personal affection, is considered as having best depicted the pathos resulting from the *sanyāsa* (renunciation of the world) of Sri Chaitanya. Narahari, on the other hand, excelled in *padas* in which Gouranga is considered as Krishna and his associates as the Gopis (milkmaids) of Vṛndāvanā. This viewpoint of Narahari, elaborated by his disciple Lochandas, another biographer, did not, however, receive general approval. The lyrics dealing with this phase of Chaitanya's life were later called *Gauracandrikā padas* and were sung at the commencement of the singing of *Rādha-Kṛṣṇa Lila*.

Next come the lyrics on the Lila of Radha and Krishna. Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandidas were all taken as models by later poets, at least in the style of composition. Some composers came to favour the style of Chandidas and wrote in a simple and direct manner. Others preferred, and so imitated, the ornate style of Vidyapati or the alliterative music of Jayadeva. The latter group actually used a mixed form of language, which later came to be known as *Brajabuli* (the language of Braja), perhaps because it was a vehicle for expressing matters of *Vraja*, with divine sentiments displayed therein. A few wrote in both styles, but for its soft and alliterative quality that went well with the *Mātrā-vṛtta* (metre), the *Brajabuli* mode of expression was more attractive. Rabindranath in his early youth experimented for a while with this mode.

Among the hundreds of late 16th-century lyric poets who wrote in the spirit of *Rādha-bhāva* and *Rāgānugā Parakiya Rati*, the most memorable are Sekhar (known as Kaviranjan and also Choṭo or younger Vidyapati for his efficiency in the Brajabuli style), Jnanadas, Balaram Das and Govindadas Kaviraj. They are first-rate composers of Vaishnava *pada* literature by any standard.

Some poems of Sekhar got mixed up with those of the earlier Vidyapati, due to the similarity of style, but modern research has detected the difference. The *kīrtan* singers also confused the poems of Jnanadas and Chandidas, not only due to the similarity in style, but also because of the affinity of sentiment. Balaram Das excelled in filial sentiments, though he also composed some memorable lines in the erotic mode which impressed even Rabindranath. Govindadas used *Brajabuli* as his only medium and in it he easily combined his erudition in the new *Rasa-Śāstra* with an ornate and musical style of his own. He is decidedly the best of all the later Vaishnava lyricists.

Jnanadas is impressive for his striking metaphors. Although a disciple of Chandidas in thought, he easily surpassed the master since he was trained in the refined way of the neo-Vaishnava doctrines. His association with the divine personality of Nityananda was also responsible for his mental make-up. Here are two examples of his beautiful *Pūrva Rāga* poems:

(i) My eyes are drowned in the ocean of forms,
My mind gets lost in the forest of youth,
My homing way is unendingly long,
My heart breaks within, and my soul
Cries not knowing why.

(ii) Eyes cry for form,
Attributes overflow the mind,
From limb to limb goes out the cry for union,
Heart cries for a touch of heart,
And seeking love, my soul knows no respite.

The lyrics of Sekhar have an enduring appeal for the depth of romantic feelings as well as for their brilliance of form. The following poem, describing Radha's pangs of separation during the rains, so impressed Tagore that he created music for it:

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Friend, my grief knows no bound,
The rains are here, it is the month of *Bhādra*,
And my home remains desolate,
Deep clouds rumble all the time,
Rains cover the face of the earth,
My beloved has a heart of stone.
When desire is keen, the winds
become sharper arrows.

In the context of the soul's eternal craving for what always eludes its grasp, Sekhar writes in another poem:

Aeons have I passed with my breast on his breast
Yet the thirst remains unslaked.

The line occurs in a piece of incomparable poetry. Govindadas' *Brajabuli* poems also have similar qualities that have earned the praise of discerning modern critics. *Abhisāra* (going out for a tryst) is a favourite theme of the Vaishnava poets, for in it lies the test of the true love of the heroine. Govindadas, however, was the first poet to bring out the special significance of *Abhisāra* according to the *Rasa-Śāstra*, which meant suffering the greatest sorrow and sacrificing all, including life. Here is Radha, in a Govindadas poem, explaining to her surprised friend why she is going out for a tryst during the hazardous rain and thunder:

Kindly abandon teasing me—
My love has been waiting for me with his
eyes fixed on my way,
and my heart breaks to think of it.
Don't speak of the rain and thunder.
Millions of arrows from *Madana* are tormenting me.
What more sorrow can come from a cloud burst?
What can the lightning do to one who carries
the burning pangs of love in her heart?

The 17th-century composers of *padas* increasingly followed the doctrines of *Rasa-Śāstra* and even took to translating the poems collected or composed by Sri Rupa Goswami (16th century), a favourite of Chaitanya. Spontaneity of composition soon gave way to formal practices. Although by the end of the 16th century three new apostles of the faith (Śrinivās, Narottam and Śyāmānanda), with their training from Vṛndavana, gave a new fillip to the Vaishnava religion, this only encouraged the poets to stick to the niceties of the doctrines more rigorously. Even so, there were a number of poets who enriched the store of lyrics till the end of the 17th century. They included Ghanasyam Das (grandson of the famous Govindadas, 17th century) and Jagadānanda (18th century, second half), both of whom wrote in *Brajabuli*; Narahari Chakravarti (alias Ghansyam—the famous biographer); Radhamohan Thakur (producer of an anthology entitled *Padāmṛta-Samudra*); Vaishnavadas (credited for the compilation *Pada-kalpataru*); and Sasisekhar of the second half of the 18th century.

Several Muslim poets also took a keen interest in the Radha-Krishna *Līla* and composed *padas* as well. Recent researches enumerate more than 50 such Muslim poets, including Alaol (the famous translator of *Padmāvatī*), Saiyad Sultan, Seikh Faizullah, Saiyad Martuja, Nasir Mamud and Aliraja. All of them were adherents of Sufism and some also knew the *Yoga-Śāstra*. The Hindu adoration for Pīrs, Ghazis and Fakirs is thus paralleled by the Bengali Muslim's attraction to Vaishnava lyrics.

The advent of Sri Chaitanya was also responsible for the birth and growth, from the 16th century onwards, of Bengali biographical literature. There were also a few noteworthy theological treatises that form part of Vaishnava literature. But only *Bhaktiratnākar*, composed by Narahari Chakravarti in the 18th century, deserves consideration. His book describes the life and activities of the three later apostles of the faith—Srinivas, Narottam and Syamananda. It is, however, mainly a book of the *Bhakti* movement. There are also some theological and poetic treatises as well as anecdotes of lesser Mohāntas of the sect, all in verse. These have only esoteric value, and interest only researchers and scholars.

Lesser Religious Poetry

As Tāntric Buddhism gradually weakened, the Tantric Saivism of the *Nātha-Yogis* grew more important. In fact, one form of Saiva Yoga was once current from Kashmir in the west to Kāmarūpa in the east. This was a system of renunciation whose final goal was the attainment of freedom from bondage, particularly the erotic relationship between man and woman. The leader of this movement, Gorakshanath (Gorkhanāth in Bengali), is said to have lived in the 10th century. Tradition has it that he saved his preceptor Minanath from the enticement of women. A long poem called *Gorkṣa-Vijay* was composed on this theme by Sheikh Faizullah, a Muslim poet of the 17th century. It tells a story, but is so cluttered with esoteric matters and miracles that it is devoid of much literary quality.

This loss is amply compensated by another poetical composition of this religious tradition. It is called *Maynāmatir Gān* or *Gopicāṅder Pāñcāli* (The Song of Maynamati or verses for recital on Gopichand) and describes Queen Maynamati, a disciple of Gorkhanath, insisting on her son taking holy orders from Hāḍipā (Jālandharipāda of the Caryās), another disciple of Gorkhanath, and leaving the kingdom and his favourite wives, Adunā and Padunā. She initially fails to persuade her son since the young queens employ all their powers to prevent such a calamity. Gopichand too is most unwilling. But Maynamati, after much persuasion and performance of

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miracles, ultimately convinces them and Gopichand agrees to take the vows. He leaves his beloved queens and stays away from home for 12 long years. But when he returns, he is endowed with the highest wisdom. In the 17th and 18th centuries, such poets as Durlabh Mallick, Bhavani Das and Sukur Mahmud made use of the bare incidents of this story and by introducing minor details displayed the sentiments of love and pathos.

Islam, through Sufism, came to be integrated with Yoga and Tantra, and thus penetrated deep into the heart of Bengal, helping the growth of *Bhakti* and *Baul* songs. There are, however, certain compositions which remain confined mainly to the Muslim community. *Jangnāmā*, *Rasul-Vijay*, *Maktūl Hossain*, or *Nabivaṁśa* are compositions of this nature. They describe either the victory of the Prophet, the tragedy of the Karbala or stories from old Islamic traditions. Some of them are modelled on the Bengali Ramayana or Mahabharata and, it is interesting to note, that the Muslim poets paid ample homage to Hindu deities in the introductory portions of these poems. The poets who composed these poems in the 17th and 18th centuries include Sabirid Khan (composer of some Vaishnava lyrics), and Muhammad Khan, Heyat Mamud, Faizullah and Garibullah (composer also of romantic tales). Some Hindu poets also joined hands with the Muslims to create such compositions.

During the same period there appeared verses on the adventures of the Ghāzis or on the miracles of the Pīr-Saints, written by Muslims and Hindus alike. The Pīrs and Ghāzis were deified human beings, but *Satya-Pīr* is a product of the religious imagination. This deity, originating in the Muslim community, held sway among the Hindus as well, by about the 17th century and gradually took the title of *Satya-Nārāyaṇa*. Offering *Śirni* (a delicious mixture of Āṭa, sweets and fruits used as oblation to Muslim deities) to Satya-Narayana on a full moon day or at the end of a month has become a common custom among Bengali Hindus. The poetry connected with the miracles of *Satya-Pīr* resembles that of any *Maṅgal* poem and has been composed by several poets from all parts of Bengal. But the most popular of such *Pāñcāli* current in West Bengal is by Fakir Ram Kavibhusan.

Among other cult songs are the *Baul* songs. The term *Baul* is generally applied to a variety of mystic devotees, including the *Āuls* (Hindu mystic saints, generally influenced by Sufi religion), the *Kartābhajās* (a sect of mystic saints of 18th century) and the *Sāiṅs* (derived from Sanskrit, 'Swami', another sect of the mystics), who follow all kinds of esoteric practices. They have no caste or communal identities. Although such a devotee may lead a family life, he does not care for earthly riches and his chief occupation is composing and singing spiritual songs and dancing to the accompaniment of an *ektārā* (a one-stringed instrument). The origin of these mystics might be traced as far back as the *Sahajiva* sages and Sufis of the 12th and 13th centuries. Their religious doctrines, however, radically changed through the impact of Bengal Vaishnavism.

The singers of this group, like the Vaishnava lyricists, have left a rich store of songs, either esoteric or devotional, protesting against all idol-worship and casteism. Some of these songs are indeed excellent poetry. Rabindranath Tagore was greatly impressed by many of them, particularly those composed by Lalan-Fakir who is held as the Kabir of Bengal.

The *Śyāmā-Saṅgīt* songs are connected with Kalika, Parvati or Durga. The *Vātsalya Bhakti* sentiments (devotion in the guise of affection for the child) of the Vaishnavas dominate many songs of this genre, perhaps all such compositions are after the 17th century. The tradition of looking upon Parvati and Siva as the daughter and her husband belonging to a Hindu home. is very old in Bengal. They are also considered an impoverished though ideal conjugal pair. The *Caṇḍī Maṅgal* and *Śivāyan* poems probably encouraged this sentiment.

An early marriage was a firmly established social norm since the 17th century, causing much pain to mothers. The worship of Durga in autumn, traditionally brings deep feelings of joy in Bengali homes, as married daughters return to their parents' homes for a quick visit of four days after the lapse of a whole year. This all too human sentiment mixed with religious fervour inspired poets and singers of the 18th century to compose songs celebrating the home-coming (*Āgamanī*) of Durga, the daughter, and her taking leave again (*Vijayā*). These songs are full of profound sadness and contain a moving poetic quality.

The *Tatva* songs, on the other hand, appeal to Syama (Kāḷi) to grant the supplicant release from birth and existence. Ramprasad Sen ('Kaviranjan') is the finest composer of such songs, and his songs are still sung in Bengal. He was a contemporary of Rayguṇākar Bharatchandra, but while Rayguṇākar is colourful and gay, 'Kaviranjan' is sad and complaining.

Other Poetry

Although some incidental details of history may be found in the *Maṅgal* poems, in the biographies of Chaitanya and even in some Vaishnava *Padas*, a whole poem treating a historical incident exclusively is rare in medieval Bengal. A poem of about 200 lines was written in the middle of the 18th century by Gangaram who took the *Bargi* (Marathas) incursions into Bengal, which he witnessed, as his subject. Unfortunately the poem contains little good poetry.

The last of the great traditional poets was Bharatchandra ('Rāyguṇākar'), a man of refined literary talents, who died in 1760. For another century no gifted poet was born in Bengal. Neither was the period favourable for literary activities. Although the East India Company took over Bengal in 1765, it did not govern. It was the age of

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landholders and landlords, whose literary tastes ran to parodies and limericks or, at best, extempore poetic debates and competitions on the theme of love. A serious poet could hardly flourish under such circumstances; instead, a band of extempore composers arrived on the scene to cater to the needs of the time. They were called *Kaviwālās* or dealers in poetry. To please their patrons, two bands of *Kaviwālās* would often compete in public, the whole affair usually culminating in the exchange of choice vulgar abuse. The tradition of this vulgarity had its origin in the erotic *Kheuḍ* songs prevalent even at the time of Bharatchandra.

Amidst such degeneration there was, however, still a ray of hope. A few cultured singers like Ramnidhi Gupta and Sridhar Pathak struck a different note by composing secular and pure love lyrics, perhaps influenced by such songs in Hindi. The close of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th was a period of experiment in music-patterns which indirectly enriched the store of lyrics in the modern tradition. This was the prelude to the early modern period, which was much influenced by the West. (All translations in this article are by Naresh Guha.)

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Gujarati

K. K. SHASTREE

The language of Gujarat has its beginnings in the 12th century. It is one of the dialects of the standard Gurjara *Apabhraṁśa*. From the latter half of the 12th century to about the end of the first half of the 15th century, there developed several forms of literary composition. Among them, the *Rāsa* form was prominent as well as abundant. Hence, the period after the death of Acharya Hemachandra is called *Rāsa-Yuga*. The *Rāsa-Yuga* lasted for about three centuries.

Rāsa-Yuga

Rāsa. *Rāsa* was, originally, a folk-dance. In due course, it assumed the form of melodious drama. Jain authors converted it into melodious narrative poetry, an epic-like form with brief cantos. Legendary stories and semi-historical themes were the subjects of narration.

Though a definite date for its composition cannot be given, the most notable work in this style and period

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appeared at about the end of the 12th century. It is surprising to find that the poet, Mir Abdur-Rehman, was a Muslim, who possibly lived in Khambhat, the Arabian seaport. His *Saṁdeśaka-Rāsa* is a fine piece of poetry which narrates the sorrows of a woman separated from her lover, who has gone to a distant place in northern India. She sends this message to him through a traveller:

> I am very much pained by the God of Love. Hence I have no peace of mind. As I am experiencing a lot of unhappiness even the cold summer-wind of Mt. Malaya is unbearable to me. The rays of the sun are full of heat, burning with the flames rising from the burning grass of the jungle.

This is a *Ṛtu-Kāvya* (a poem about the seasonal separations of lovers) and hence the worries over separation that are experienced at different seasons of the year are found in plenty in this poem:

> The Winter, which was burning the grass of the jungle, passed away. The beautiful month of *Caitra* (the first month of Spring) has come. The wind of Mt. Malaya is playing gently. The desire of sexual pleasure is making the separated couples burn.

This is a poem unique in *Apabhraṁśa* as well as in Gujarati and allied languages. It follows strictly the Sanskrit poetic tradition.

In the *Rāsa-Yuga*, barring this *Samdeśa-kāvya* and, as far as is known, a few later non-Jain poems, all the work, whether in verse or prose, is by Jain authors, mainly monks. The first short poem, *Bharateśvara-Bāhubali Ghora* by the Jain monk Vajrasena-suri, belongs to the second half of the 12th century. It narrates the conflict between the emperor Bharata and his younger brother Bahubali, both sons of the first Tirthamkara of the Jains, Rishabhadeva, alias Adi-natha. Another *Bharateśvara-Bāhubali Rāsa* (1185), by Shalibhadra-suri, a Jain monk, has the same story but is an epic-like melodious poem of 14 cantos (called Thavanis) with different reading as well as singing metres. It is a notable piece of poetry whose central theme is bravery. Thus marches the army of the Emperor Bharata as it goes to pay homage to his ascetic father:

> Huge elephants were moving. Large cattle-drums were sounding. The king was swollen with pride. Neighing horses were moving. Mount Meru trembled with the burden of chariots. The diamond on the head of *Śeṣa-nāga* (a serpent god believed to be holding the earth on his head) was glittering.

The latter is the first *Rāsa* to be found. It paved the way for the *Paurāṇika*, the long episodic narrative poems (i.e. *Ākhyāna-kāvyas*). *Rāsas* were by Jain authors, *Ākhyāna* by non-Jain ones.

Phāgu. The original word in Sanskrit is *phalgu*, an adjective that means: fine, handsome or beautiful. Later it became a noun and a synonym for spring. The poets of Gujarat accepted it in its derived form, *Phāgu*, and used it to describe a form of poetry that deals with the springtime frolics in connection with the different aspects of Love.

The oldest *Phāgu* so far found is of only 25 verses. This is the *Jinacandra-sūri Phāgu* (c. 1285), wherein the asceticism of the hero is the focus. Verses 6 to 20 of this poem are now lost.

The earliest complete work, so far known, is *Sthūlibhadda Phāgu* (between 1234 and 1244) by Jinapadmasuri. In it the rainy season dominates. In the poem the hero Sthulibhadda becomes an ascetic. The description of the season is given the guise of love, though the love of the heroine Kosa is one-sided. Kosa's beauty is described thus:

> Nava-jovana-vilasṁta-deha navaneha-gahillī,
> Parimala-laharihi maya-mayaṁta rai-keli-pahillī,
> Adhara-bimba-paravāla-khaṇḍa vara-caṁpāvannī,
> Nayana-salūṇī ya hāva-bhāva-bahuguṇa-saṁpannī.

> Her body has been beautified by the new bloom of l
> She has turned mad due to new love. She has been diffu
> all around by the waves of fragrance as she is quite re
> to enjoy the sexual play (with the hero). Her lips are
> if they are parts of coral. The colour of her body is l
> that of the Michelia Champac flower. There is beauty
> her eyes and amour in her gestures. (tr.)

Neither the time of its composition nor the author of *Vasantavilāsa Phāgu* (a poem of the sports in the spring season) are known, but this *Phāgu* of 84 verses is excellent. It has no particular hero nor heroine. It is divided into three parts: (i) a description of the jungle in the full blossom of spring; (ii) the worries, sorrows and lamentations of separated couples; and (iii) the happy union at the end. Spring is described as:

> ...in full blossom with all the mango trees spreading fragrance of their flowery shoots. The wind, agitating hearts of proud ladies, is blowing gently and creating happiness in the hearts of people otherwise worn. Cottages of plantain leaves, garlands of flowers, wreaths of flowers have been prepared in jungles, long wreaths of leaves of trees have been made. (tr.)

Among other *Phāgus* are: *Thūlibhadda-Phāgu* (c.135 Halaraja, and two *Neminātha-Phāgus* (c. 1366) by Kr varsiya Jayasimha-suri. Another *Phāgu* is *Puruṣo* *Pañcapāṇḍava-Phāgu* written by an unknown author

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the close of the 14th century. The characters in this *Phāgu* are from the Mahabharata, but the situations are the poet's own. The father Pandu (unlike in the Mahabharata) goes to the capital Hastinapura, taking with him the five Pandavas and Draupadi after her marriage to them. They are received at a grand festival. The Pandavas and Yadavas later go to a mountain situated between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna. It is springtime and the poet presents a charming description. *Nārāyaṇa-Phāgu* (1441) by Kirtimeru is another noteworthy *Phāgu*. In it the games the milkmaids and Krishna play are narrated.

Vivāhalu (About Marriages). Jain poets always tried to celebrate the renunciation of the world by their preceptors in such a way that their heroes metaphorically appeared as the wordly bridegrooms of Virakti (a feminine Sanskrit word for 'renunciation'), the bride. *Jineśvara-sūri-Vivāhalu* (c. 1275) by Somamurti, and *Jinodaya-sūri-Vivāhalu* (c. 1377) by Merunandana-gani, are two such poems.

Bāramāsī (Twelve-month Poems). This is a form of poetry wherein the worries and sorrows of a hero or heroine separated from the other are narrated, dealing with each and every month of the year, either in one verse or more, till the happy reunion takes place.

One such *Bāramāsī* is from the long epic *Visalade-Rāso* (c. 1216) possibly composed at Ajmer in Rajasthan by Nalha. This poem, with two verses for every month, describes the sorrows of Queen Rajimati, who has been separated from King Visalade. *Neminātha catuṣpadikā* (c. 1250) by Vinayachandra-suri is a *Bāramāsī* about one-sided sorrow. Yadava Princess Rajimati, who is betrothed to the Yadava Prince Nemi, cousin of Krishna according to Jain mythology, grieves when she learns that Nemi Kumara seeks to renounce the world. Many *Rāsas* and some *Phāgus* deal with the same theme at length. In this *Bāramāsī*, the separation is centralized in a dialogue with one of her friends. Rajimati asks:

Śrāvaṇi saravaṇi kaduyaṁ meha,
Gajja virahi rijhijjai dehu,
Vijju jhabakkai rakkhasi jeva,
Nemihi viṇu sahi sahiyai kema.

In the month of *Śrāvaṇa*, the bitter Rain is roaring with sprinkling showers; hence (my) body is trembling in the separation. The lightning is twinkling like a giant lady. O friend, how can I endure all these? (tr.)

(The friend replies:
'You should not worry about this. Don't satisfy the desired objects of your foes. What is to be lost if Nemi has gone away? There are hundreds of bridegrooms better than Nemi.') (tr.)

In the end, Rajimati too renounces the world and becomes a disciple of Nemi.

Metrical Compositions (Compositions in Particular Metres Only). Pure metrical poems are rare. The oldest one known is *Upadeśamālā-kahāṇaya* (c. 1269) by Vinayachandra-suri. In it Jain religious stories are narrated briefly, being summaries of a Sanskrit work, *Upadeśamālā* (before the 9th century) by Dharmadasa-gani, in a metre called *Chappaya* (of eight feet). The most notable poem of this genre is *Raṇamalla-chanda* (c. 1398) by Sridhara Vyasa, who also composed *Īśvarī-chanda* or *Bhagvatī-bhāgavata* (which narrates the legendary story of Durga, the Mother goddess). The latter is an ordinary work, but the former is a significant historical poem of 70 verses in different metres. In this heroic poem is narrated the conflict between Rava Ranamalla of Idar (in the Sabarkantha district of Gujarat) and a Muslim Governor, Mir Mupharrah of Patan (the old capital of Gujarat, District Mehsana, North Gujarat), who represents the Delhi Sultanate. The poem is a paean to bravery and sings in classical mode:

The roaring and booming (Muslim) warriors,
riding their swift horses, were glittering,
but when they saw Raṇamalla they became quite powerless. (tr.)

Another work in this style of poetry is *Virāṭa-parva* (c. 15th century A.D.) by the Jain monk Shalisuri who narrates in it the different incidents that befall the Pandavas when, in exile, they kept themselves hidden in the capital of the King of the Virata country. It is a poem written in 182 classical metres, over all of which the author has full mastery. He strictly follows the Mahabharata and does not gild the separate incidents.

Stories Based on Imagination. There are some poems that resemble the *Rāsas* in form but differ from them as they are not of a religious or legendary nature. Their themes are purely fictitional and they possess all the features of imaginative creations. They are not, however, folk-stories, which usually are about historical characters.

Most of such story-literature has its source in old Sanskrit and Prakrit literary works such as *Kathāsaritsāgara* and others. In these stories the atmosphere is far from that of medieval times; men and women move freely, with no social inhibitions. Sea voyages to distant lands and miraculous incidents are also very common in this poetry.

The oldest poem known is *Haṁsarāja Vaccharāja Copāi* (1355) by Vijayabhadra, a Jain monk. Having the same theme is *Haṁsāulī* (1371), by Asaita, which gives a fine picture of a free society wherein women enjoy all sorts of independence. *Haṁsāulī* is divided into four parts, each part having a hundred or so verses, all in *copāi* metre.

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There are also three songs. One of them describes the sorrow of the heroine, who remembers her husband in a previous birth (when they both were birds).

Rājakuari hiadu haṇi: pūrava prema-prasaṅga,
Āgi dāvānala dahi, valī dukha dājhī aṅga.
(Dekhī) popaṭa paṁkhiā, navala-neha nara-nātha,
Jima vani bhūlī haraṇalī, tima hū sāmī sātha popaṭa.

The princess beats her breast and says: 'When I remember the love incident of my former birth, (I see that) the fire of the jungle is burning, at the same time my limbs are burning due to internal pains. Oh bird Parrot, Oh my husband with new affection! I have missed the company of my husband just as a doe did in the jungle. I am crying and roaming in the jungle. (tr.)

Other poems of a similar kind are *Trivikrama-Rāsa* (c. 1359) by Jinodaya-suri, *Maṁgala-kalaśa-copāī* by Sarvananda-suri and *Jñāna-paṁcamī-copāī* (c. 1367) by Viddhanu. All these are compositions mainly in *copāī* metre. *Sadayvatsa-Vira-Prabandha* (c. 1410) of Bhima is a poem in 730 verses, with different metres in several places. Some songs are also to be found at particular points. It is a story about Love, Bravery and Wonder, though six other sentiments are scattered through the poem. The author's use of figures of speech is in the old Sanskrit tradition. *Vidyāvilāsa-Pavāṛu* (c. 1429) of Hiranda-suri is another noteworthy poem in this style. Love is its theme.

Mātṛkās and Kakkas. *Mātṛkā* alphabet covers all vowels and consonants; *Kakka* alphabet covers only consonants. Both are metrical compositions, the former mainly in the *copāī* metre, the latter in the *duhā*. They are verses in proverb form, rather didactic and alphabetically arranged. The following works are known:

Mātṛkā-caupai by an unknown author.
Saṁyakta-māī-caupai (c. 1275) by Jagadu.
Saṁvega-mātṛkā (c. 1294) by an unknown author.
Dharma-mātṛkā or *Duhā-mātṛkā* (13th century), an exception in *duhā* metre, by Padma.
Śālibhadhra-kakka (13th century) an exception that tells the life-story of Salibhadra, an ancient Jain ascetic.
Kāka-baṁdha-caupai (c. 1394) by Viddhanu.
Kāka-baṁdha-caupai (1394) by Devasundara-suri.
(Thelast two are *kakkas* in *copāī*-metre instead of in *duhā*).

Almost all the poetical works in the *Rāsa-yuga* are prosodial. An exception is *Pṛthvīcandra-carīta* (c. 1422), by Manikyasundara-suri, composed in Palanpur. This work is in alliterated, stylized prose full of poetic peculiarities, such as is found in Sanskrit epics. It tells the story of the marriage of King Pṛthvichandra of Paithana to Princess Ratnamanjari, daughter of King Somadeva of Ayodhya. The prose in the Varṇaka style is worthy of notice. As far as is known, this kind of alliterated prose is not found in allied Indo-Aryan languages of medieval times.

Ādi-Bhakti-Yuga

The flow of Jain compositions is continuous up to the beginning of the modern period, which starts about the middle of the 19th century. Hundreds of Jain authors contributed the bulk of older forms of literature.

Though the continuity of Jain Gujarati literature is unabated, the new era nevertheless began with the work of a powerful poet, Narasimha Mehta, who revived the musical short poems. These are devotional songs in classical Indian melodies, particularly to Lord Krishna. Mehta's lead was followed by Bhalana of Patan (North Gujarat) and Mirabai of Rajasthan. As devotional literature dominates their time, it has been called *Ādi-Bhakti-Yuga* (the first pioneering period of devotion, from about 1450 to 1550).

Devotional Poetry. In medieval Gujarati literature, Narasimha Mehta (c. 1408–80), who was born in Talaja and lived in Junagadh is considered the *Ādi-Kavi* (the first poet) of the Gujarati language. These three forms of literature were introduced by him:

(i) Devotional songs:
  (a) Lyrical songs pertaining to Lord Krishna.
  (b) Devotional and philosophic, lyrical as well as didactic songs.
(ii) Songs and poems
(iii) Autobiographical songs.

Narasimha, an able singer, was considered master of two particular melodies, viz. *Kedāra* and *Rāmagarī*, the first to be sung in the evening, the second in the morning. *Prabhātiyās* or *Parabhātiyās* (morning songs) are sung in *Rāmagarī Rāga*. Among these devotional songs are lyrical songs pertaining to Lord Krishna, who, as if he were a Gopi, wishes union with the Lord, his beloved. Compared with the Indian poetry of this period, Narasimha's work seems pioneering. Jayadeva author of the classical Sanskrit poem *Gīta Govinda* written in Orissa in the 12th century, the *Mahānubhāva-paṁthī* poets who wrote in Marathi in the 13th century and Vidyapati, who wrote *Udiā* songs in the 14th century, all wrote poetry that was objective at its best. Narasimha's work was different. He wrote lyrical songs of three types: *Śṛṅgāramālā*, *Vasanta-nā pada* (songs of the spring season) and *Hiṇḍolā-nā pada* (songs pertaining to the rainy season).

Śṛṅgāramālā includes a few objective songs among the many subjective ones. The original language used by Narasimha is not available; in a majority of cases we have to be satisfied with such translations:

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While playing at night with the Black one (Lord Krishna) I embraced him delightfully. I wanted to fulfil my desire, hence when I took Him on my breast, I attained happiness. At the time of union the Dear One removed the cloth of my head and my shame also. My desires were fulfilled, when I had the chance to drink the nectar-juice coming from his lips.

In the spring as well as the rainy seasonal songs, there are again found some objective songs, but most of the songs are subjective. Devotional and philosophic songs are mostly objective. Narasimha's devotional songs are those of a pioneering preacher of the Bhakti cult. *Vaiṣṇava Jana to tene re kahie, pīda parāi jāṇe re*—Mahatma Gandhi's favourite song—was a creation by Narasimha Mehta.

In the field of philosophical songs, Narasimha was not a pioneer as before him, and even contemporaneous with him, were devotee poets such as Namadeva in Maharashtra and Kabir in North India. Nevertheless, Narasimha's presentation differs from that of these poets. His uniqueness is in his unparalleled lyrical touch.

Paurāṇika (Legendary) Songs and Poems. Narasimha is only a song composer when he writes narrative poetry relating to Krishna and songs about his birth and his games.

He composed *cāturīs* (songs related to the intelligence of the hero and the heroine, Radha, a cowherd's spouse) on the lines of Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda*. The text of 25 *cāturīs* are genuine. Of these, the first twelve are continuous. All of them are fine pieces on love.

His *Rāsa-sahasrapadī* (a collection of several songs pertaining to the dance of Krishna with the gopis) is, in a sense, transformation of that portion of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* from its tenth part. *Sudāmā-carita* (a life-sketch of a Brahmin, Sudama, a co-student of Krishna in his childhood) is a continuous poem linking nine songs and having a central theme.

Narasimha is the first, and probably the last poet of medieval times, who sang of incidents in his own life. Five songs deal with miraculous happenings in his life. He uses the word *Divya dṛṣṭi* (divine sight) in one place. This means powerful genius, which is what he possessed.

Bhalana (in the first half of the 16th century) is known for his *Paurāṇika Ākhyānas* (episodic-like compositions). His songs about Krishna and Rama are also well known. Unlike Narasimha Mehta, he sings of affection to children, of *Vātsalya Rāsa*. For example:

Oh Beautiful to my heart! I perform a benedictory ceremony (I offer myself as an oblation); Take your supper. Here there is butter as well as a loaf, milk and cooked rice. You may take whatever you like. Seeing you (my) feeble husband becomes angry at (our) residential place. Oh Madhava, I request you not to go to each and every other house. You are everything to me. Seeing you my heart becomes wet (with feeling). Oh Raghunatha, the Lord of Bhalana, bestow on me happiness of the world. (tr.)

Bhalana is the first Gujarati poet to compose five songs in *Vraja Bhāṣā*. He was influenced by such contemporary *Vraja-Bhāṣā* poets as Suradasa and others in North India. His songs about the child Rama are also very charming.

Mirabai (Mīra, 1499–1564), later contemporary of Bhalana, sang in her early life in Marwad and Mewad (in Rajasthan) and in later life in Gujarat. Most of her songs are lyrical. They are subjective songs in which she considers herself the beloved of Lord Krishna (in her words, *Giridhara Nāgara*). She was firm in her belief that:

Govindo prāṇa hamāro re, mane jaga lāge khāro re;
Mane māro Rāmajī bhāve re, bīju kāi najare nāve re.

Govinda (Lord Krishna) is my soul. The world feels salty to me. I like my Rama. (Oneness in her mind for Krishna and Rama.) Nothing else comes into my eyes. (tr.)

Her attachment to God and her refusal to return to her house are revealed so:

Oh Rāṇājī, I am in possession of a toy-like God Rama. That toy came to my house with a jingling sound, which is not made by anyone's hand. Great ascetics have become tired of trying to get it. It has come in the possession of a rare person. It is unapproachable and imperceptible, lying on a summit called *Śūnya* (cipher). It is Mira's Giridhara Nagara. My heart is full of the Black God (Krishna). (tr.)

Other poets who composed *Paurāṇika* were Bhima and Madana whose songs followed Narasimha's but preceded Bhalana's and Mira's.

The germs of legendary poetry are to be seen in the *Paurāṇika* (*Paurāṇika* means based on the tales of the puranas) songs of Narasimha Mehta. Bhalana gave it a status and called it *Ākhyāna*. But even before Bhalana, in the lifetime of Narasimha itself, a few poets had started writing such poetry.

The first non-Jain poet, Varasanga (Vīrasiṁha; 2nd half of the 15th century) contributed a long poem called *Uṣāharaṇa* taking its theme from the *Harivaṁśa* and the *Bhāgvata Purāṇa*. He presents well the sentiments of love and bravery. He also introduces some specialities of his own time. Some beautiful flights of imagination are also noteworthy. He mainly uses *duhā* metre, but has also written a few songs with classical melodies. He has also written prose passages which he calls *Boli* (speech). These are in the Varṇaka style found in *Pṛthvīcandra carita* (quoted earlier).

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Mandana Bandharo (known for his songs) has summarized Ramayana. His *Hanumantopākhyāna* (an episode in the life of Hanuman) is from Ramayana, while *Rukmāṅgada-kathā* is from the *Aśvamedhaparva* of the Mahabharata of Jaimini. His *Prabodha-batrīśī* in 32 cantos (each of 24-line stanzas) is a didactic poem, wherein he has woven not less than 500 everyday proverbs. In all his works, he displays his poetic genius.

Bhima was the first poet to summarize the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*. His summary in 16 parts, which he called Kalā, was composed in 1485. His *Prabodha-prakāśa* (1490) is a metrical translation in *copāī* metre of a Sanskrit drama, *Prabodhacandrodaya*, written in the 11th century by a poet of the Magadha country (modern Bihar). Bhima's first work is a musical poem of classical melody.

But the most notable of the *Paurāṇika* composers is Bhalana (already noted as a composer of songs about Lord Krishna and Rama). He has composed no less than 13 *Ākhyānās* (episodic poems) with themes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana and several puranas. But his best effort is a summarised prosodical translation in the *Ākhyāna* style of *Kādambarī*, the famous Sanskrit prose story by Mahakavi Bāṇa. In it, he retains the verbosity of Bāṇa in several places and even adds some of his own, demonstrating the unique capacity of a translator.

Stories. During this period, only two known poets have contributed to the genre of stories. Vasu's *Sagāḷasā ākhyāna* (c. 1474–84) and Narapati's *Nandabatrīśī* (1489) and *Pañcadaṇḍa* (1540) are the best known works of this type.

Historical Poems. This period witnessed a major poetic achievement in the creation of a historical poem *Kānhaṛde Prabandha* (1456). This four-part poem describes the battles the invading Muslim armies of Allauddin Khilji of Delhi fought with the Rajputs of Gujarat and Western Marwar. Padmanabha of Jhalor, in Western Marwad, is a poet in the true sense. Bravery is the main sentiment the poet expresses in his poetry. He has also included a few songs. The following is a song of sorrow, in which is described the grief of a princess of Allauddin over the death of the Prince Viramade, a Rajput warrior she recalls as being her husband in a previous birth.

> I remembered (our) love of the former birth and my necklace became wet (with tears).
> Why should there be decorations for us? Oh virtuous and attractive prince, what is this displeasure? I am mad with love and you are a Songirā Cauhāṇa (Rajput). You are my soul and I am a lady (wife) at your house. Our one birth passed away; do not forget (our) love. My heart has been greatly agitated. Oh my husband, please listen to me. You have gone to Amarapura (the capital of the heaven), but I shall give up your company only at my death. (tr.)

Ample use is made of Arabic and Pharsi words, in appropriate places in this poem.

Another notable poem of this period is *Vimalaprabandha* (1512) by a Jain monk, Lavanyasamaya. It is in nine parts and has bravery for its dominant sentiment. Historical episodes from the life of Vimala Shaha, a minister of the first rank of the Solanki King Bhimadeva I, are narrated. The poet uses some Arabic and Pharsi loans. Two other poems, *Vastupāla Tejapāla Rāsa* (after 1492) by a Jain monk, Parsvanatha-suri, and *Khumāṇa Rāsa* (c. 1519) by Dalapatavijaya are also noteworthy historical poems of the period.

Stories of Imagination. The following stories are the best known of this genre written during this period:

Vidyāvilāsa Narendra Caupai (1460) by Nayasundara;
Siṁhāsana-batrīśī Caupai (1463) by Malayachandra;
Vikrama-carita Pañcadaṇḍa (1500) by Jinaharsha;
Nanda-batrīśī Caupai (1504) by Simhakushala;
Vikrama-Khāpara Caupai (1507) by Rajashila;
Vidyāvilāsa Pavāṛu (1509) by a second Hirananda;
Bilhaṇa-Pañcāśikā and *Śaśikalā-Pañcāśikā* by Bilhana; and *Vetāla-pañcaviśī* (1537) and *Siṁhāsana-batrīśī* (1540) by Jnanachandra.

Two non-Jain poems, viz. *Nandabatrīśī* (1485) by Narapati and his *Pañcadaṇḍa* (1504) are also notable. All these poems are non-religious.

Ākhyāna-Yuga

The beginning of the non-Jain *Paurāṇika* has been noted earlier. These poems derived their themes from the episodes the Mahabharata, Ramayana and other puranas. The word *Upākhyāna* in the Mahabharata means episode. Bhalana, in his adaptation of Bāṇa's *Kādambarī*, used the words *Upākhyāna* and *Ākhyāna* in the same sense. He called his *Nalākhyāna* an *Ākhyāna*. From his time, *Ākhyāna* became an independent form of literature. It was the dominant form of literature in this period, called *Ākhyāna-Yuga*, which stretched to the end of the 17th century.

Paurāṇika Ākhyānas. Nakara (c. 1500–1575) succeeded Bhalana in writing this sort of poetry in abundance. He used a number of *parvas* from the Mahabharata, the whole of the Ramayana, and a few other works. All these works, adaptations from the original, demonstrate his poetic ability. They are all long narrative poems in several cantos (called *Kaḍavu*) and are meant to be sung in several melodies localized from the classical. This kind of poetry was meant to be sung at night in cities, towns and

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villages and hence the poets used language that could be understood easily. Except for Premananda, the last poet of this period, none is a poet of the first rank.

The Great Premananda. With Premananda Bhatta (1636–1734), the greatest poet of this period, *Paurāṇika* poetry reached its zenith. With the exception of his works on the life of Narasimha Mehta, he took all his other themes from the Mahabharata, Ramayana, *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* and other such sources. He has 16 outstanding compositions to his credit. *Okhāharaṇa* (c. 1667), *Candrahāsa-Ākhyāna* (1671), *Abhimanyu-Ākhyāna* (1672), *Madālasā-Ākhyāna* (1672), *Sudāmācarita* (1682), *Sudhanvā-Ākhyāna* (1684), *Nalākhyāna* (1677 and 1686), *Raṇayajna* (1690), *Rukmiṇīharaṇa*, *Saptamaskandha* (of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*), *Vāmanacarita* (Aṣṭamaskandha of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) and *Daśamaskandha* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) are all long narrative poems, among which *Daśamaskandha*, though incomplete, surpasses all. One or two illustrations will suffice to show Premananda's genius.

Māru māṇekaḍu risāvyu, re Śāmaliyā,
Tāra mana-mā e śu bhāvyu re Śāmaliyā?
..... (55th canto)

Alas! Oh Black God! My little ruby is very much displeased. Oh Black God! What came in your mind? Leaving me aside, the guilty mother, why did you jump in? The waters of Kalindi (the river Yamuna) are black, and black Kaliya (cobra) resides there.... Now where is the hope of meeting you? Fate usurped the wealth which was in the form of a child.....
How am I living when you have gone away? Was there a lesser relation between us? The true affection is known, when, at the hearing of it the heart bursts. Stone is harder than wood, iron is harder than stone; my heart is similar to the thunderbolt. How can I show my face to the people? You took the excuse of a ball. Did any affliction come in your mind? Did my binding you with a mortar come in your memory? For that reason did you jump? (tr.)

Four contemporaries of Premananda, Ratneshvara, Viraji, Haridasa Vanik and Dvarako sang some *Ākhyānās*. Ratneshvara attempted to translate the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* verbatim and succeeded. Viraji also wrote a story called *Kāmāvatī*, while Haridasa sang an *Ākhyāna* about the marriage of the son of Narasimha Mehta.

Concluding this period were four Jain narrators: Nayasundara, Gangavijaya, Samayasundara and Rishabhadasa. Nayasundara's *Rūpacandakuvara-Rāsa* (1581), *Surasundari-Rāsa* (1590), *Prabhāvati-Rāsa* and *Nala-Damayanti-Rāsa* are four notable *Rāsa* poems. *Kusuma-śrī-Rāsa* (1652) of Gangavijaya is an interesting poem. Samayasundara was notable for his great variety of poems in different literary forms. His *Nala-Damayanti-Rāsa* (1617) and *Sītā-Rāma-Caupai* (1672) are noteworthy poems. Nayasundara and Samayasundara followed the Jain versions of Mahabharata to write *Nala-kathā*, while Samayasundara followed the Jain version of Ramayana to compose *Rāma-kathā*. Rishabhadasa of Khambhat (most active between 1617 and 1632), a Śrāvaka, composed several *rāsas* as well as short poems. Two of the *rāsas* on the Solanki king Kumarapala and on the famous monk Haravijyasuriji (a teacher of Akbar) are purely historical poems.

Philosophic Poems. This period is rich in philosophic poetry. The first of the philosophic poets was Dhanaraja (17th century), follower of Sankaracharya. Another Dhanaraja summarized the Bhagavad-Gita's philosophic passages in a poem which people sing even today.

The first half of the 17th century saw two minor and two major poets. Narahari is a translator, while Butiyo wrote 13 songs full of philosophic ideas. Gopala's *Jñānagītā* or *Gopālagītā* (1649) is a masterly contribution that renders the philosophy of Sankaracharya in metrical Gujarati understandable even to a layman. His devotional as well as philosophic songs are also noteworthy. But among the philosophic poets, Akho (1615–75) is the foremost. His *Akhegītā* (c. 1650) is a philosophic poem full of figures of speech. A fine sample of his work is:

Oh brother, where there are means, there is counting; where is the counting, when there are no means? That is the achievement of the Sahaja Brahman. Oh, brother, he, who understands, sees like this. A philosopher sees everything accommodated in that *tattva* (the real thing-God).
.....
Akho says: Please hear all. Only great saints know His unknowable art. If you wish to attain that state, serve Hari (God), Guru (teacher) and Santa (Saint). (tr.)

A large number of Akho's devotional and philosophical songs as well as small philosophical poems are still available. His work *Ṣaṭpadi Chappās* (a metre of six *capāi* feet), is a didactic work in which hundreds of proverbs are interwoven.

Bhanadasa is known for his *Garabās* (dance-songs), to be played during the first nine nights of the month of Asvina. This is one of his best *Garabās*:

Gagana-maṇḍalanī gāgaraḍī, Guṇa Garabī re,
Teṇi rami Bhavānī Rāsa, gāu Guṇa Garabī re.
.....
The goddess Bhavani (wife of Lord Siva) is dancing a *Rāsa* with *Garabo* (a perforated jar) on her head in a form in the sky. Please sing this virtuous *Garabī* (song). The Sun, diamond of the daytime, has been made a lamp-pole

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with the light of the Moon. The earth is a lamp in which the Mount Meru is the wick. The seven seas are the Soil, with pearls on all sides. The first Śakti (power) of the invisible Brahman is playing a juicy (full of poetic sentiments) *Rāsa*-dance. (Seeing this) the people of all the fourteen worlds lost their senses (captivated). Bhanadasa says: Please sing this virtuous *Garabī*. (tr.)

Historical Poems. Most historical poems of this period pertain to real persons. The life of Narasimha Mehta has been sung by several poets. *Hūḍī*, *Māmeru-Mosāḷū*, *Śrāddha* and *Śāmaladāsa-no-Vivāha* pertain to him. Mehta has himself composed biographic poems about *Hūḍī*, *Māmeru* and his son's *Vivāha*. (*Hūḍī*: a cheque drawn in favour of some pilgrims going to Dwaraka; *Nāmeru*: ornaments and clothings supplied at the time of the first pregnancy of his daughter; *Śāmaladāsa-no-Vivāha*—the marriage ceremony of his son; *Śrāddha*—the religious ceremony on the occasion of the death anniversary of his father).

Stories of Imagination. These stories include:

Mādhavānala-Kāmakaṇḍalā (1518) by Ganapati (a poem notable for its treatment of love);
Śṛgāla-purī (about middle of the 16th century) by Nakara (first great adapter of the Mahabharata, Ramayana and other Puranas);
Premāvatī (first half of the 16th century) an unknown author; and
Haṁsāvatī-Vikramakumāra-caritra (1560) by Madhusudana Vyasa.

Uttara Bhaktiyuga (Later Phase of the Bhakti Age)

Nearing the end of Premananda's active phase, devotional poetry became a major form of literature once again while other forms lost their abundance. Hence, this fourth and last period of Traditional Gujarati Poetry may be described as the *Uttara-Bhaktiyuga* (later devotional period).

Paurāṇika Akhyānas. Some of the better-known works are:

Boḍāṇā-Ākhyāna, *Utkaṇteśvara-nu Ākhyāna*, *Śivāmāhātmya* by Shamala Bhatta (first half of 18th century);
Bhāgavata Purāṇa (excluding 10th skandha, 1698–1709) and *Subhadrāharaṇa* (1702) by Vallabha Bhatta;
Daśamaskandha (1740) by Sundara;
A few *Ākhyānas* (1717–19) by Ranachoḍa;
Dhruvākhyāna by Raghunatha Vaishnava;
Prahālādakhyāna (1761), *Sītāsvayaṁvara* (1776) and *Dhruvākhyāna* by Kalidasa;
Draupadī-vastrāharaṇa by another Kalidasa; and
Dhirajākhyāna by Nishkulananda.

Among these, the most notable is Giradhara's work, in which he ably presents the Ramayana and *Kṛṣṇacarita*. In the field of *Paurāṇika* poetry, he is considered a good *Ākhyāna*-reciter. The last master poet of this period, Dayarama (1777–1852) of Dabhoi, contributed some *Ākhyānas*, but they are of inferior quality.

Imaginary Stories. Shamala Bhatta (1700–66) of Ahmedabad has quantitatively surpassed all other fiction writers in writing stories in verse between 1716 and 1765. His best collections are *Siṁhāsana-batrīśī* and *Suḍā-botterī* (containing 32 and 72 stories respectively). His presentation of the free Indian society of the pre-Muslim age is most attractive. Another non-Jain poet, Sundaraji Nagara, wrote another *Siṁhsāna-batrīśī* in 1740 in Varanasi (U.P.).

Other fictional poetic works are:

Sagāḷasā-Ākhyāna (1720) by Narohari Halari;
,, ,, (1739) by Ratno; and
,, ,, (1787) by Tulajarama.

Jain authors contributed:
Vacharāja-carita-Rāsa (1702) by Nemavijaya; and
Kanakāvatī-Rāsa (1711) by Kantivimala.

Devotional and Philosophic Poems. Devotional poems are divided into three categories: (i) Vaiṣṇava, (ii) Śaiva and (iii) Śākta. Philosophic poems are of two kinds pertaining to (i) Śaṁkara Philosophy and (ii) Vallabha Philosophy, both providing monism, illusive and pure respectively.

Vaiṣṇava poems mainly pertain to the Krishna cult. Indravati alias Prananatha Swami, a follower of the Paranami sect, and Raje, a Molessalam Muslim, have contributed a number of poems and devotional songs respectively about Lord Krishna. Prananatha's seasonal poems as well as those pertaining to the sports of Krishna are noteworthy. Raje is a staunch Krishna-bhakta who makes readers recollect Narasimha Mehta. In a sense, he revived devotional literature in its true form. *Rāsa-pañcādhyāyī*, *Māna-samo*, *Dāna-samo*, *Bāra-māsa* and *Rādhi kāno Svapna-vivāha* are among the 3,000 and more songs he composed.

A Bania bhakta, Ranachhoda (1644–1724) of Khada (Dist. Kheda) composed several devotional songs published under the title *Raṇachoḍa Bhaktanī Vāṇī*. Raghunatha Vaishnava (1719–1814) of Ahmedabad has written hundreds of songs that can be sung in temples of the Vallabha Vaishnava sect. He strictly follows the famous Hindi *Aṣṭacāpa* poets of the same sect. He has also written some *Ākhyānas*. Trikamadasa Majamudara (1744–99) of Jambugadha is another notable poet of this period who has contributed hundreds of songs. He has also written some Pharsi devotional songs.

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This period is also rich with hundreds of devotional songs by such devotees of the Swaminarayana Vaishnava Sect as Muktananda (1764–1830), Nishkulananda (1766–1848), Brahmananda alias Ladu Barota (c. 1775–1849), Premananda Prema-sakhi (1757–1845), Devananda and Manjukeshananda. Among them, Brahmananda and Premananda Prema-sakhi are geniuses who almost reach the class of Narasimha Mehta and Dayarama of Dabhoi. A fine piece by Premananda Prema-sakhi is:

Rūpa joī, rūpa joī, Rasiyājī Rāja, moī;
Jovā jevī che rūḍī cāla tamārī,
.... Prāṇa lidhā che mārā proī. Rasi.

Oh king-like, Gratifier of senses! Seeing your beauty I am totally captivated. Your gait is worth seeing. It has pierced my soul. Oh Dear! Your laughter is just like pearls. I remember you always. Oh Krishna, a clever lady like the goddess of Love Kamala (Lakṣmī) drinks the water after washing your feet daily. Oh darling of Premananda! none is so beautiful in all the three worlds as you. (tr.)

These Swaminarayani poets have also written hundreds of songs in praise of Swami Sahajananda, the founder of the sect, whom they consider God incarnate.

Bhakta Ranachhoda (17th century) of Bhayavadar, who has sung beautiful songs in which he considers himself smitten by and longing for Lord Krishna as his lover, should also be mentioned in this category of poets.

Dayarama of Dabhoi (1777–1853) the last of the medieval age poets is considered one of the three ranking medieval master poets of Gujarat, the other two being Narasimha Mehta and Premananda Bhatta of Vadodara. Among the three, Narasimha and Dayarama are famous for their lyrical songs pertaining to Lord Krishna, while Premananda is known for his narrative *Ākhyānās*.

Dayarama presents a variety of songs in three distinguishable sub-forms: *Padas* (songs), *Garabās* and delicate *Garabīs*. Didactic as well as narrative *Padas* are mostly objective. There are some *Padas* which are subjective also. But *Padas* are always sung and never danced. Use of the objective narrative *Garabās* is always made in collective dances. Unlike *Padas* they are always danced by both males and females, as a mixed group or as segregated groups. They are mostly objective and are of considerable length. *Garabīs* are strictly subjective and sung as well as danced, but by groups of women only. *Garabīs* are always short, like *Padas*. Here is a *garabā*:

To dance the *Garabā* the White Lady came out,
Her name is Radhika, she is voluptuous and resides in the land of Vraja.
When she dances, the bells of her anklets make a fine sound.
The jingling small bells sound Gir Gir, Tom Tom, Chum Chum.
So many mates are with her; I call their names;
Chandrabhaga, Chandravali, beautiful Champakalata, Lalita, Vishakha,.... (tr.)

Śaiva songs are meant to be sung in temples of Siva on special occasions as well as during daily worship. Sivananda of Surat (18th century) is a Saivite devotee, who has composed several attractive songs. Mithu Maharaja (18th century) has also written noteworthy Saiva poetry, revealing that he was well-versed in Sanskrit also. He has also composed some poems in classical metres.

In the medieval period, in the *Ākhyānayuga*, Bhanadasa sang a great number of *Garabās* in praise of Mother-God. Later, Vallabha Dhola (about first half of the 18th century) wrote several narrative *Garabās*, also in praise of Mother-God. He was followed by Dalapatarama Nagara, Ambarama, Nano-Vohro, Manchharama, Haragovana, all of whom wrote narrative *Garabās*, which are still sung and danced during the first nine days of the month of *Āśviana*. These songs to the Mother-God belong to the *Śākta* category of devotional poetry.

This period was also rich in philosophic poetry, which the other three periods were not. Nathabhavana, alias Anubhavananda Svami (first half of the 18th century), wrote *Śiva-gītā* (1732), *Brahma-gītā* (1733), *Cāturio* (1733) and *Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa*, four major works explaining the philosophy of Sankaracharya. Another prominent poet was Pritamadasa (1718–98), who wrote a series of philosophic poems as well as songs. His *Ekādaśa-kandha* of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* is a noteworthy poem. *Hari-no-māraga che śūrā-no, nahi kāyara-nu kāma jo-ne* (The Path of God is for the Brave, where there is no place for a timid one!) is a well-known song. He too was a follower of Sankaracharya. In the same mainstream, Gujarat was fortunate to have such philosophic poets as Jivanadasa, Jivanarama, Jivarama Bhatta, Dhiro (1753–1825), Gauribai (c. 1759), Kevalapuri (1759–1849), Bapu, Prago, Niranta Bhakta (1770–1846), Bhoja Bhakta (1784–1850), Manohara Swami (1788–1849) and Chhotama Kavi (1813–85).

Among these the most notable are Dhiro Bhakta, Gauribai (a Nagara lady of Dungarpur, Rajasthan) and Bhojo Bhakta, all of whom have lucidly dealt with the philosophic views of Sankaracharya, each in his or her own style. Dayarama too should be mentioned in this connection. In addition to his masterly devotional songs of different kinds, he has established himself as a master singer in the philosophic field as well. His contribution include *Rasikavallabha*, *Puṣṭipatha-rahasya*, *Bhaktipoṣaṇa* and other major works dealing with the philosophy of Vallabhacharya. In a beautiful *Garabī* song he sings:

Pāo Prema-rasa, Prāṇajīvana re: dīna thaī jācu re;

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Mukti-mārāgine āpajo jñāna re, hu to nava rācu re.
Rijhe rābaḍi thakī to garība loka re, bhogīne na bhāve re;

I humbly beg you, Oh Life of my soul! Please make me drink juicy love. You may bestow knowledge to those who follow the path of liberation; I am not satisfied with it. The poor are pleased with gruel; the affluent do not like it. (tr.)

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Hindi

PRABHAKAR MACHWE

The Hindi language comprises a number of dialects, of which Khariboli (Khaḍīboli), Rajasthani, Maithili, Brajbhasha and Awadhi have been used for literary composition. Though the modern standard Hindi accepted as the official language of the states of Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and as one of the official languages of the Union of India is the literary form of Khariboli, it was not the chief literary medium before the 19th century. Of the few poets who wrote in Khariboli earlier the prominent ones, other than Amir Khusrau, belonged to Dakhini, a subdialect of Khariboli spoken in the Deccan, to whom are traced the beginnings of Urdu literature. Thus the bulk of the traditional poetry in Hindi was written in Dingal (early Rajasthani), Maithili, Brajbhasha and Awadhi. The *rāso* poems and Mira Bai's *padas* are in Dingal; the *padas* of Vidyapati are in Maithili; the *padas* of Suradasa and the single stanzaic poems of the *Riti* poets are in Brajbhasha; and the narrative poems of Tulasidasa and the *Premākhyānaka* poets are in Awadhi. The poems of Kabirdasa and Nanakdeva exhibit a mixing of various dialects.

Traditional poetry in Hindi is a continuation and development of the poetry of the Apabhramsas from which evolved the dialects of Hindi. The main trends in Apabhramsa poetry were the religious works of the Siddha and Jain poets, heroic ballads and other secular poems, both narrative and non-narrative. The narrative poems were written in a combination of the metres *dohā* and *caupāī* recurring in a regular pattern. This narrative form was adopted in Hindi by Tulasidasa and the *Premākhyānaka* poets. Apabhramsa lyrics were written in the musical *pada* style and the tradition was carried on and enriched in Hindi by Vidyapati, Kabirdasa, Suradasa, Mira Bai and others. The third variety was that of the single-stanzaic poems written in the *dohā* metre. A large number of such single-stanzaic poems were written in Hindi too mainly in *dohā* form, but to some extent in other metres also. Hindi adopted, adapted and innovated not only the poetic forms but also the main trends of the Apabhramsa poetry, establishing and developing a tradition of its own, rich and colourful and bearing the stamp of the changing times. Though this tradition has imbibed much from the rich and powerful tradition of the Sanskrit literature, it comes in the direct lineage of the Prakrita and Apabhramsa literatures.

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Ādikāla (The Early Period)—Up to the Mid-14th Century

The Beginnings. The question of the first Hindi poet and of the first Hindi poem is a matter of dispute. There are at least three views in this regard. The first and the earlier view was that the first Hindi poet was one Puśya or Puṇḍa, believed to be of the 7th century. But no work of this poet has as yet been found. The second view, advocated mainly by Rahul Sankrityayan, has Sarhapa (Saroruhapāda, 7th or 8th century), one of the eighty four *Siddhas*, as the first Hindi poet. The third view is that of Ganapatichandra Gupta who projects Salibhadra Suri, a Jain poet, as the first Hindi poet and his *Bharateśvara-Bāhubalī Rāsa*, written in 1184, as the first Hindi poem. But Hazariprasad Dwivedi is of the considered opinion that it is difficult to draw a line of demarcation between Apabhramsa and Hindi, and as such Hindi literature should be reckoned from the 14th century only. All the works of the earlier period projected as works in Hindi, he considers, from the perspective of language, as 'laden with Apabhramsa' (having *apabhramś kā baḍhāv*). Scholars who take the origins of Hindi literature to the 7th or 8th century include Sivasimha Sengara, George Abraham Grierson, Mishrabandhu (the Mishra brothers Śyamabihāri and Śukadevabihārī), Chandradhar Sharma Guleri, Rahul Sankrityayan, Ramchandra Shukla and Ramakumar Verma, though some differences of opinion persist among them. The entire period of about six hundred years is *Cāraṇakāla* (the bardic period) according to Grierson; *Ārambhikakāla* (the initial period) according to Misrabandhu and *Siddhasāmantayuga* [the *Siddha* and *Śāmanta* (Feudal) period] according to Rahul Sankrityayan. In the opinion of Ramachandra Shukla, the first authentic historian of Hindi literature, the period prior to about A.D. 1000 was of *Prākṛtābhāsa Hindi* (Prakrit-like Hindi), and the next three hundred year period he calls *Vīragāthākāla* (the period of heroic sages). Ramakumar Verma calls the former period *Sandhikāla* (the period of transition) and the latter period *Cāraṇakāla*. However it is the non-commital name *Ādikāla* (the early period) preferred understandably by Hazariprasad Dwivedi that has gained currency.

The Trends, Poets and Works. The main groups of trendsetters in this period were: (i) the *Siddhas*, (ii) the Jain poets, (iii) the *Nāthapanthis*, and (iv) the heroic poets.

The Siddhas, eightyfour in number, belonged to the later Buddhistic cult called *Vajrayāna* which was greatly influenced by the *Tāntrika* way of life. They were nonconformists, who did not believe in the *varṇāśrama dharma* (the doctrine of the four *varṇas* or castes and the four *āśramas* or stages of life). They defied the superiority of the Brahmin priests and believed in mixing sex with spiritualism. The foremost among the Siddhas was Sarhapa who composed *Dohākośa* (The Dictionary of *Dohās*). He has criticized hypocrisy and exhibitionism in religious rites and has emphasized the importance of serving the *Guru* (preceptor). He has preached a direct communion with God by natural ways and discarded the technical jargon of the so-called *cognoscenti*. Some of the other prominent Siddhas were Sabarapa (8th century; author of *Caryāpada*), Ḍombipa (9th century; author of *Ḍombigitikā, Yogācārya*) and Kanhapa (9th century). A feel of the writings of the Siddhas can be had from the following couplet of Sarhapa:

jah maṇ pavaṇ ṇa saṁcarai ravi sasi ṇah paves
tahi baṭ citta visām karu sarahe kahia uves.
(Where neither mind nor wind can reach,
Neither sun nor moon can enter,
At that point let the soul relax,
Saraha says with stress.)

The main Jain poets and their works are as follows: Devasena (*Śrāvakācāra*, 933); Salibhadra Suri (*Bharateśvara-Bāhubalī Rāsa*, 1184); Asagu (*Candanabālā Rāsa*, 1200); Jinadhamma Suri (*Sthūlibhadra Rāsa*, 1209); Vijayasena Suri (*Revantagiri Rāsa*, 1231); and Sumati Gani (*Neminātha Rāsa*, 1213).

The *Nāthapanthis* adhered to a cult in which *haṭhayoga* was practised and which believed in a kind of mysticism preached by Gorakhnatha (*Gorakṣā Nātha*, c. 845), by which he defeated the Islamic atheism (see *Gorakha-Turka Samvāda*). He is credited with the authorship of fourteen works. Gorakhnatha's followers of the 13th century included Chaurangi Natha, Gopichanda, Jalandharipai and others.

The works of the heroic poets are generally known as the *Rāsau* poems. *Rāsau* is derived from *rāsa*, a style of verse-biography which was also sung, originally connected with Krishna's dance (*rāsalīlā*), later on used by Jain poets for dramatic stories till the 14th century; but in Dingal *rāsau* is mostly a heroic tale, a versified biography of a hero. The following are the important *rāsau* poems of the period: Dalapati Vijaya's *Khumāṇa Rāsau* (9th century); Narapati Nalha's *Bisaladeva Rāsau* (1155); Chand Bardai's (Candabardāī) *Pṛthvīrāja Rāsau* (12th century) and Jagnik's (Jaganika) *Paramāla Rāsau* or *Ālhakhaṇḍa* (13th century). *Khumāṇa Rāsau* is a long poem of 5000 stanzas in different metres, describing the battles won by Khuman, the king of Chittor (Rajasthan). Its sidelights are the abundant descriptions of the heroines and of the six seasons (*Ṣaḍṛtuvarṇana*) in the conventional style. *Pṛthvīrāja Rāsau* is a huge work of 16306 stanzas divided into 69 *samayas* (cantos). It is a compendium of several heroic events in the life of Prithviraj Chauhan (Pṛthvīrāj Cauhān), a brave hero and a romantic lover, who died in 1194 in a battle against Mohammed Gori.

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It is replete with descriptions of palaces, harems, beautiful queens and also crucial battles. Though its author Chand Bardai is said to have been a bard in Prithviraj's court, the poem does not tally with the authentic historical facts. *Ālhakhaṇḍa*, a description of the fight between Alha and Udal of Mahoba (Bundelkhanda in M. P.) is a popular folk-ballad ascribed to Jagnik.

A Critical Survey and Appraisal. As a language, Hindi poetry was absorbing freely from various dialects from Mithila to Mewar, and unifying them into a common form or channel of communication. This was a process of Hindi poetic language passing from Sanskrit and Prakrit stylized form to the language of the people. This was the beginning of that larger upsurge in the 15th century, in the form of the bhakti movement, where poets, irrespective of their different languages as mother tongues and different cultural milieus and even different faiths in various cults, began to chant and celebrate in one idiom and one diction.

The metaphysical priestly jargon and technical terms were left behind. These poets who came from the humble strata of the society, some of them being in the lowest rungs of the social ladder, used very simple vocabulary. They took their similes and metaphors from the common people's lives, used a language which was spontaneous and did not care for sophistication. So the external form of expression reflected the urgency of inner feelings.

But there were secular poets also, who did not belong to any of the cults: *Vajrayāna* or *Nāthapantha*, or the Buddhist, Tāntrik or Jain ways of life. A good number of them were attached to the courts of kings and they sang of the heroic deeds of their patrons in the *Rāsau* poems. Another group wrote to entertain the common listeners as exemplified by the riddles by Amir Khusrau (1253–1325). I quote here some lines from *Pṛthvīrāj Rāsau* to give an idea of the heroic style:

Bajjiya ghora nisāṁna rana cauhana cahūṁdisi
sakala sūra sāmanta samari bala jantra mantra tisi
uṭṭhi rāja prithirāja bāg lagga manahu vīr naṭa
kaḍhat vega mana vega lagata manahu bīju jhaṭṭa ghaṭa
(Drums are sounding loudly in the four directions, the drums of King Chauhan;
All brave feudal lords, all military strength and strategy afoot.
Arose Raja Prithviraj all arrayed like an expert in showmanship
Sword came out with the speed of mind and lightning, sure)

Khusrau gives a simple riddle in early Hindustani or Khariboli:

Ek thāl moti se bharā
sab ke sir auṁdhā dharā
voh thāl gol gol phire
ek bhī motī nahīṁ girā
(A platter full of pearls
inverted hangs on all heads
The plate moves round and round
But not a single pearl falls)

The reply is 'the sky full of stars'. But the virtuosity of Khusrau in punning and handling both high-flown Persian and common Brajbhasha is remarkable for that time, seven centuries ago.

Bhaktikāvya (Devotional Poetry)—Mid-14th Century–Mid-17th Century

The Bhakti (Devotional) school of poetry in Hindi flourished from the mid-14th to mid-17th century. At that time the Hindi-speaking area was politically dominated first by the Pathan and next by the Mughal dynasties. The social beliefs of the masses were challenged and they had to confront a new set of values. The rural and urban Hindus were coming closer. In the religious sphere many pre-Aryan or proto-Aryan forms of worship were inducted into the Brahmanic tradition. Even the number of the deities of the pantheon were enlarged. There was rethinking about mere idol-worship as many temples were broken and looted by iconoclasts and military adventurers. This lead to the development of two kinds of worship and accordingly the Hindi bhakti poetry of this time is divided into two streams: (i) *Nirguṇa*—the poets who did not worship any one formal deity, but believed in a formless God or abstract 'Name'; (ii) *Saguṇa*—the poets who believed in singing and writing about a god with attributes, even a personalized god in the form of a human incarnation like Rama or Krishna. Both the schools had a metaphysical base and every poet used poetry as an outpouring of his soul addressed to his own form of the Absolute or God.

The Nirguṇa Poetry. The *Nirguṇa* School borrowed from Upanishads, the non-dualistic philosophy of Shankar-charya, also from the *Nātha* cult, and Sufi tradition of Islam. Most of the *Nirguṇa* poets emphasize direct communion with God. They talk in an idiom which is on the one hand protesting against orthodox ritualistic Brahmanism and its rigid caste system, and on the other maintaining the main core of mystic experience through 'grace' and of the highest kind, some sort of divine frenzy. Some of them insist on *nāmajapa* (repeating the name of God), others on *sādhana* (penance). There is a strong stress on world-and-life renunciation; and images of Death and transitoriness of life, full of almost an existentialist angst, found in these poets. Their alienation from worldly life makes them very proximate to modern pessimistic poets.

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full of 'angst'. Details of the lives and works of some of the great souls of this school are given below.

Ramananda (1368–1468). Very little is definitely known about the dates and details of the life of this saint. *Bhaktamāl* gives him as the fourth in Ramanuja's line of disciples. He is said to have brought *bhakti*, born in the Dravida land, to the North. Kabir and Pīpa were his disciples. He was an early reformer who did not believe in caste inequities and untouchability. He built a temple and a sect in which all worshippers, irrespective of their castes, could enjoin equally. Very little of his verse compositions are available in any book form. But the influence of his personality and principles is seminal.

Kabir (1398–1518). The most important poet in the *Nirguṇa* school and, according to some critics, the towering poet figure of that period, is Kabir (Kabīradāsa). Though little is known about his date and life, generally scholars seem to agree to the dates given above. Born in the *Julāha* (weaver) caste, he was respected by both Hindus and Muslims alike. In his *dohās* and *padas* Kabir shows rare insight and symbolic metaphysical height and depth. As a poet he had a rare kind of catholicity and humanism which broke all conventions of caste, creed or cult. Kabir's language is a mixture of many dialects of Hindi and testifies to the impact of Arabic and Persian.

Kabir's contribution as a poet was tremendous. He preached universal religion of man, above and beyond Hindu or Muslim orthodoxy, criticizing both. Hence he was equally admired and adored by both. Kabir's greatness lies in the mystic quality of his poetry. Though unlettered himself he could point out the futility of cults and ritualistic narrow-mindedness. For him the direct communion between man and God was much more meaningful than following this or that Book, or 'ism'. Kabir was spontaneous and very simple. His observation of humble everyday life around him on which he based his similes and metaphors was very perceptive. He did not believe in very abstract flights of imagination, nor in luring his listeners to an impossible El Dorado or Utopia. He did not fear any earthly power and criticized the Mullah and the Pandit alike. He did not believe in caste or any inequality between man and man.

Nanak (1469–1538). Guru Nanakadeva was the founder of the Sikh faith. He was born in Talavandi near Lahore. His father was Kaluchand and mother Tripta. Very early he became a mendicant and travelled all over India and beyond. He was a liberal humanist saint, who preached against the orthodoxy and rigidity of the caste system and other blind beliefs. His *padas* are compiled in the sacred book of the Sikhs called *Guru Granth Sāhib*. Thirty-eight verses, called *Japuji*, form the core of his philosophy. His language has Persian and Punjabi overtones, though he has also used Brajbhasha.

Dadu (1603). Dadu Dayala, the founder of the Dādū Panth, details of whose life are not fully known, lived in Sambhar, Rajasthan and wrote his hymns and poems in Brajbhasha. Rajjab and Sundardas were his disciples. Some of his lines, as translated, are as follows: 'What is the use of composing poems, unless you have realized God? The Absolute is the Master, first recognize it.' 'With the untruth or the non-essential there is the difference and distance. With devotion comes atonement. Meeting the true persons gives real joy and bliss.'

Other Poets. There are so many other minor saints and poets belonging to this school that a mere mention of all of them will need much space. But a few among them were outstanding. For example, Raidas (1398–1448), an illiterate cobbler, composed profound devotional poetry. He criticized the outer exhibition of religious orthodoxy and futility of many rites. The other great saint-poets were:

Malukdas (1574–1682) of U. P. (author of *Gyān bodh* and many other works).
Sundardas (1596–1689) of Jaipur (author of 42 works).

There are many other metaphysical poets like Bavari Sahiba, Sadana, Beni, Pipa, Sen, Dhanna, Angad, Shekh Farid and others. Many of them belonged to the so-called lower castes. Bavari is the only poetess amongst them. Though unlettered, their poetic compositions are very profound in philosophical meaning.

The Premākhyānaka Poetry. The influence of Persian poetry, particularly of the *Masnavi* (*Mathnavi*) style, containing a long narrative, particularly of some earthly romance (in which the hero is a sufferer of the pangs of separation, and the epic is not divided in cantos and one verse-style is used all over the epic, and mostly composed by Muslim poets), is apparent now in Hindi poetry. Historians of Hindi literature call this school of poetry *Premākhyāna ka Kāvya* (based on a love story). Some of these long poems have an allegorical philosophical meaning. Every character stands for something different, if so interpreted; the hero is the devotee, the heroine the object of devotion. Thus 'the devotion of the moth for the star', of the soul for the Highest Soul (*Paramātma*) is metaphorically described by these Indian poets, influenced by the Sufi school of great poets like Jami, Nizami, Rumi and Omar Khayyam.

When Ramachandra Shukla, the first authentic historian of Hindi literature, wrote his history in 1929, only eight such works were available, but now 53 manuscripts have been discovered. Some scholars maintain that they are not mere imitations or compositions modelled on Persian

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Mathnavis. They are also influenced by the Apabhramsa romances of Nala-Damayanti, Udayana-Vasavadatta and so on, as well as the *Bṛhatkatha*. Some common points found in these verse-romances are: every heroine's name ends with 'vatī', like 'Padmāvatī', 'Mṛgāvatī', etc.; the birth of the hero or heroine is with a divine plan; the heroine generally lives on an island like Malaya, Simhala, Ratnadvipa, etc.; the love is aroused through a dream-sequence or looking at the heroine's picture; the hero changes his dress and searches for the heroine in the form of a pundit, Brahmin, *bhikṣu*, mendicant, etc.; generally the hero and heroine meet at a temple or garden; the hero has a duel with the bodyguard of the heroine; the hero falls in love with and/or marries one or more women other than the heroine; the hero achieves success with the help of some superhuman power, deity or Siddha, Yogi or Baital (*Vetāla*), etc.

The earliest poem in this style is *Haṁsāvalī* in old Rajasthani by Asait written in 1370; this work is also claimed to be in Gujarati. The attempt at mixing the folk-ballad style as in *Haṁsāvalī* is further extended in Mulla Daud's *Candāyana* or *Lorikāyana* composed in 1379.

Kutuban's *Mṛgāvatī* (1503) and Manjhan's *Madhumālatī* (1545) are two other long narrative poems in this style. In *Mṛgāvatī* at the end, after the death of the hero, the heroines perform *satī* (self-immolation). In *Madhumālatī*, the hero is shown to be a monogamist, which is exceptional in the sense that heroes in other similar folk-epics have many queens. In the verse-autobiography *Ardhakathānak* of Banarasidas (1586- ?), it is described that young people in that century too were eager to read these poems. These narratives describe the beauty of nature and the man-woman relationship in a manner which elevates the readers from a sensuous world to the ethereal and non-sensuous. For love, the heroes and heroines here are ready to sacrifice their lives. Sacrifice purifies the erotic element in such sagas and thus the central theme of Sufism, the combination of earthly love with the divine, is established and glorified. Thus poems of this style are an interesting link between folk poetry on the one hand and Tasawwuf (Sufi philosophy) on the other.

The most important among such folk-ballads, however, is *Padmāvatī* composed probably in 1540 by Malik Muhammad Jayasi (1492-1542). Its story is an interesting mixture of fiction and history. Ratnasena, the king of Chittor, comes to know of the beauty of Padmāvatī, the princess of the island Simhala, from a description given by Hīrāman, the pet parrot of Padmāvatī, and sets out as a yogi along with his sixteen thousand friends also wearing the apparel of mendicants, leaving behind his beloved wife Nāgamatī to endure deep pangs of separation. Guided by Hīrāman, towards Simhala they reach the island crossing the seven seas. There Ratnasena meets Padmāvatī in a temple on a *Vasantapañcami* day (the festival of the fifth day of the spring season) and swoons at the first glimpse of her. Later on with the blessings of Lord Siva, Ratnasena marries Patmāvatī and returns to Chittor with her. So far the story is fiction. Then history takes over in the form of Allauddin's attack on Chittor. Allauddin is captivated by a single look at Padmāvatī's reflection. Then he takes Ratnasena as a captive to Delhi whom Gorā and Bādal free deceiving Allauddin. In the end Ratnasena is killed in a battle against another king, Devapāla, and Padmāvatī and Nāgamati become *satis* on Ratnasena's pyre.

Jayasi has told this story in chaste Awadhi, as a narrative having a Sufi-like double entendre. The allegory is woven in such a way that Ratnasena is the symbol of Mind or Man, Padmāvatī that of Faith or *Buddhi* residing in the heart, Nāgamatī that of Worldly Ties; and Rāghavacetana who tells of Padmāvatī to Allauddin and the Sultan himself of Devilish Powers. Thus Jayasi, a disciple of the Sufi mystic Khwaja Nizamuddin Aulia, has taken the ordinary mortal king's love affair to great heights. His poetic excellence lies not only in his detailed descriptions of nature, but in the delineation of human emotions, particularly of the 'pangs of separation', in the portrayal of various characters, in the architectonics of the structure, sequences of the events and in his great command over vocabulary. In the words of Ramachandra Shukla, 'as a poet describing pure love in its extensive and deep form, as a person who describes loyalty, pride, chastity and other values in an aesthetic manner, as a poet who beautifully blends the real and the imaginary, and as one who uses pure Awadhi, there is no peer to Jayasi'.

Saguṇa-Bhakti. The *Saguṇa* stream of poetry is related to the Vaishnava poets, who were again, categorized into two schools according to whether they worshipped Krishna or Rama, the two most prominent *avatāras* (incarnations) of Vishnu. The wave of *Bhāgavata* religion encompassed the whole of India, from the 5th century before Christ, as sculptural and architectural evidences corroborate. It was really a reaction against Vedanta which appealed more to the intellect, and also against Buddhist and Jain atheism. However, it was only from the 10th century onwards that it got its metaphysical foundations in the philosophies of Ramanuja, Nimbarka, Madhva and Vallabha. Ramanuja's *Sri-Sampradāya* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita*, as well as Vallabha's *Puṣṭi-Mārga* and *Viśuddhādvaita* influenced the *Saguṇa* poets of Hindi who worshipped Rama and Krishna respectively.

Krishna-Poetry. Krishna-bhakti is the main source of inspiration of many important Hindi poets. The most prominent among them are Vidyapati who wrote in Maithili, Suradasa, Nandadasa and the other poets of *aṣṭachāp* (a group of eight initiated ones, who were disciples of Vallabha and his son Viṭṭhalanātha—four each), who sang in Braj

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bhasha; and Mirabai who sang in Rajasthani. The common factor amongst these great poets, from different provinces, communities and classes, was their single-minded faith in Krishna as the *pūrṇāvatāra*, and so they all drew profusely from the fount of *Śrimad-Bhāgavata*. For them Krishna is god and man at the same time. All the nuances of love and passion are delineated in detail by Vidyapati. Meeting and parting, trysts and the ecstasy of love as the all-absorbing emotion, are delicately lyricized. So in Suradasa and the poets of the *Aṣṭachāp* school, every small incident in the life of Krishna, in his infancy, boyhood, adolescence and youth, is caught in multi-coloured splendours. This was not mere poetic skill but a great joy of celebration, a sublime sense of becoming one with the Divine. The same kind of supernatural frenzy is seen in Mirabai, who discards the material pleasures of the palace and seeks brambles and bushes, walks barefoot through sands and stones, just to meet her godly lover—Krishna.

The devotion to Krishna in medieval Hindi poetry is marked as distinct from that of Jayadeva, the 12th-century Sanskrit poet of the *Gīta Govinda*, or of the South Indian poets of the Krishna cult in more than one way. In Hindi poetry one finds an indigenous blending of the classical and the folk-forms of poetry and music. It is an interesting confluence of the Saiva and Vaishnava in Vidyapati; an ingenious device on the part of Suradasa to criticize in *Bhramaragīta* (The Song of Bee) the school of mere cerebration presented as *Jñāna-Yoga*, juxtaposing it with the very human, earthly and spontaneous responses to Krishna as a child, a playmate, a lover, a sharer in everyday moments of joy and sorrow; and a counterpart of the Rajput hero, in Mirabai. This synthesis of the sublime and the sensuous occurs not only on the philosophical level, but it has a deeper aesthetic dimension. All these poets wrote in popular musical modes and adopted such poetic styles, as are neither complicated, nor products of erudition. Vidyapati's *nacāri*, Suradasa's *bilāval* and *horī* and Mirabai's *mārū rāga* are excellent examples. So also is their language, which is very close to the colloquial and the commoner's conversation. Even the dramatic sequences and dialogues in their poetry have the pithiness and effectiveness of an idyllic, rural setting. If Krishna was an *Ābhira* god, a Yādava and a cowherd, his exploits and his behaviour patterns have that authentic ring. It is not cut off from the life and environs in which these poets breathed and sang.

Vidyāpati (probably 1380–1460). Variously described as 'Abhinava Jayadeva' and 'Navakaviśekhara', both Maithili and Bengali claim him to be their great devotional poet. He was very versatile. On the one hand he wrote in Sanskrit books on Siva, Ganga (*Bhū-parikrama* and *Puruṣaparīkṣa*); on the other he wrote in Avahaṭṭha (Apabhraṁśa), *Kīrtilatā* and *Kīrti-patākā* praising Raja Kirtisingh. But he is more known for his musical lyrics. Chaitanya sang them and swooned in ecstasy. Apart from the diffferences the opinion amongst critics as to whether he is a *bhakta* or a mystic or an erotic poet, he stands out to be a very remarkable and picturesque poet of the Krishna-Radha theme, a Vaishnava *bhakta* and a great musical composer. In very few words he could evoke an entire lively picture of a situation or a character, whether it is of adolescence or rainy season or a newly-bathed beauty or Radha's dramatic reactions to the messenger. Vidyapati's poetic excellence could not be surpassed by poets after him, in musicality and picturesque quality.

Suradasa (d. 1583). Suradasa was born in a Sārasvata family in the village Sīhī, near Delhi. He met Vallabhacharya in 1509–10 at Gaūghāṭ, who asked him to sing about the *Lilā* (Divine sport) of Lord Krishna and not merely sing morose songs of supplication and self-pity as he was doing till then. From this time onwards till his death in 1583, he composed new songs everyday and sang them everyday in the temple of Srinatha, before the Lord. According to Goswami Gokulanatha, who wrote *Caurāsī Vaiṣṇavan kī vārtā* (The Account of the Eighty-four Vaishnavas) Suradasa had composed nearly 100,000 *padas*. By oral tradition whatever could be salvaged and saved are now compiled in *Sūrasāgara*.

The greatness of Suradasa as a poet lies in his rich and varied contribution to Hindi traditional poetry which can be summed up as follows:

(i) Though he was blind—and on this there is a difference of opinion as to whether he was purblind or whether he lost his eyesight later on, after adolescence—he could vividly describe and draw all the colours and contours, lines and landscapes and evoke a scene so graphically that his power of word-picturing or etching is still unsurpassed—Homer, Milton and Bhimu Bhoi are all combined in him—so that some take him to be endowed with para-psychological fourth-dimensional insight.

(ii) His greatest contribution as a poet is the equally moving depiction of the intense feelings of Yasoda the mother, and of Radha and the gopis—the lovers—an unmatched achievement in world-poetry, as Ramachandra Shukla rightly points out.

(iii) The way Suradasa very perceptively observes every playful prank of Krishna as an infant and a boy and poeticizes the relations between the mother and the child, the indulgent cowherds and cowmaidens, has no peer in Hindi literary history. He is aptly extolled as the supreme poet of *vātsalya rasa*—parental love.

(iv) By emphasizing the friendly form of devotion (*sakhyabhakti*), Suradasa has sublimated the sensuous to a super-sensuous level. Such effortless and easy transformation of the material into, metaphysical is a special quality of his poetry.

(v) His *dṛṣṭi-kūṭa* verses, though the authorship of these

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verses is a disputed one, are a clever device to hide the obvious, where 'art lies in concealing the art'. With Kabir and other *Nirguṇa* poets, such riddle-like compositions were to challenge the Vedantist intellectual and had an element of exhibitionism. But in Suradasa, there is nowhere any trace of showing off his learning or extra-poetic equipment.

(vi) As a lyricist, Suradasa adds a new dimension to the first Swami Haridāsa's (1478-1573) tradition by introducing several new *rāgas* and innovations within the classical framework.

(vii) Suradasa also introduced three or four new stories, in the traditional *Bhāgavata* Krishna-lore, underlying social unity and castigating narrow differences due to birth and wealth.

The *Aṣṭachāp* poets like Nandadasa (1533-83) and others not only shared Suradasa's tradition, but also complemented it. If one studies comparatively the uddhava episode in Suradasa and Nandadasa the point will be clear. Nandadasa also introduces folk-metres and folk-tunes. His *Rāsapañcadhyāyī* is an excellent illustration of poetic skill. He uses Brajbhasha all through his writings, in an ornate standard form. His art of composition is compared to that of a jeweller.

The most important amongst poets of the Krishna cult outside *Aṣṭachāp*, who is also different from the others, is Mirabai (Mīrābāī, 1504-60). At the death of her husband Bhoja Raja, the eldest son of Rana Sanga of Chittor, Mira turned into a devotee of Krishna and started moving about with holy men. Though it was tolerated by Rana Sanga, it was not liked by Vikram Singh, the successor of Sanga. She visited Pushkar, Vrindavan and Dwaraka. She is a poetess supreme of the yearnings of a soul separated from the Supreme Lover. She had the frenzied belief that her soul was married to Krishna. Different aspects of this unrequited love, 'the desire of the moth for the star', gives additional poignancy to her compositions.

Rama-Poetry. The other important incarnation of Vishnu, widely worshipped and sung in traditional Hindi poetry is Rama. Though all long and short poems on Rama are based on Valmiki's Sanskrit epic, there have been innovations and improvisations, additions and alterations according to each regional culture. In Hindi too the local flora and fauna, the social customs and individual mores have consciously and unconsciously crept into all the Rama *kathas*. In the period of bardic poetry in Hindi, Rama was portrayed as a hero, who inspires dormant masses to prepare against an attack on the values of life. In the age of devotional poetry, the lyrical muse of Hindi poets turned to the pranks, frolics, the dalliance and love-affairs of Krishna. This also affected the poetry about Rama and several poets devoted cantos to the description of the love between Rama and Sita. Some Jain poets, on the contrary, painted Rama's story as a plank for moralistic preaching, particularly against violence. With all these strands woven together, the great poet Tulasidasa (Tulasīdāsa, 1543-1623) added a glorious chapter to the tradition of poetry about Rama by his immortal *Rāmacaritamānasa*, and several other compositions based on Ramayana (like *Gītāvalī*, *Kavitāvalī* and *Vinaya-Patrikā*, etc.)

Tulasidasa's poetic contribution can be summed up under eight heads:

(i) He resolved the conflict between Saiva and Vaishnava cults, by showing that both Shiva and Vishnu are in fact two aspects of the same Supreme Being. Thus he paved the way for religious unity amongst the Hindus in north India.

(ii) He wrote in several dialects of Hindi and even incorporated both pure Sanskrit and pure Persian words. He used Brajabhasha and Awadhi with equal dexterity.

(iii) He had command over all the important styles of composition—narrative epic style, lyrical, descriptive and didactic.

(iv) He imparted a human character to Rama, portraying him as an ideal son, husband, brother, king and so on.

(v) He also shows awareness of the stresses and strains of his times and describes Rama's meeting with the boatman or Śabarī in terms which belie the charge levelled against the poet that he believed in a rigid caste-system.

(vi) He is an excellent painter of characters. In an epic like Ramayana, earlier writers committed the mistake of painting characters in black-and-white. But Tulasidasa knows the grey areas also and avoids monochromes.

(vii) He excells in aphorisms. This is in direct line of the Sanskrit didactic tradition.

(viii) Though he knew Sanskrit very well, he does not exhibit any pedantry.

Rītikāvya (Erotic-Rhetoric Poetry) (17th and 18th Century)

The main poetic trend which flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries is generally known as *Rītikāvya* or *Rītiśṛṅgārakāvya*. The word *rīti* here does not mean the styles of writing discussed by Vamana and other Sanskrit poeticians. It, however, means 'a way of writing poetry' in the sense that the poems referred to were written as illustrations of rhetorical concepts such as the various *alaṅkāras* (figures of speech), *guṇas* (poetic qualities), *rītis* (poetic styles), *rasas* (poetic sentiments), *nāyaka-nāyikā-bhedas* (typology of heroes and heroines) and the like. These poems were written as *lakṣyas* (illustrations) of *lakṣaṇas* (definitions). It was Ramachandra Shukla who called such poetry *Rītikāvya*. Since the illustrative verses were to a great extent on *Śṛṅgāra* (erotic sentiment) some scholars prefer the name *Rītiśṛṅgārakāvya*. This poetry was mainly in the tradition of the older court-poetry in Sanskrit and the Prakrit languages. As a result bulk of the poetry is in the *muktaka*

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(free stanzaic) form. The stanzaic form was suited and enough to illustrate the rhetorical concept under consideration.

The *rīti* poetry may be classified into two types on the basis of the way—explicit or implicit—of illustrating the given rhetorical concept. The first type, *rītibaddha* (*rīti*-bound), consists of those poems which were written specifically to illustrate the poet's own definition of some rhetorical concept say, for example, *upamā* (simile). The other type, *rītisiddha* (*rīti*-implied), only implicitly illustrates a rhetorical concept in that the poet has not prefaced his poem with a definition of the concept. In addition to the two types of *rītikāvya* there were written during the two centuries poems which were free of the clutches of *rīti*. Of these, what are called the *rītimukta* (free of *rīti*) love poems are most characteristic of the period. Others were the continuation of the older devotional, heroic and didactic traditions.

In Hindi, erotic-rhetoric poetry was composed either in the tradition of *Gāthā-Saptaśatī*, as Biharilal wrote his famous *Satsaī*, which was in the form of small picturesque poems in couplets, independent of each other (*Muktaka*); or mostly in the form of devotional lyrics addressed to Krishna and his love-lore, in the line of *Gīta Govinda*; or in detailed descriptions with elaborate classification of *nāyikās* and their different kinds according to physical, regional, professional, psychological types and models.

In the rhetorical kind of poetry devoted to heroic subjects one finds four categories according to the objects of such panegyrics and extollations: mythological, historical, imaginary heroes, and patrons of poets. The poetry which was full of short compositions, both devotional and didactic, also is in line of Sanskrit *śataka-kāvyas* or hymns. Philosophical poems are influenced by not only Bhartrihari's *Nītiśataka* and similar Sanskrit poems, but also by Buddhist and Jain poetic compositions by monks and nuns. There is a constant tone of moralizing and preaching in such works.

The Rītibaddha (Rīti-bound) and Rītisiddha (Rīti-implied) Poetry. The two types of *rīti* can be further divided under two sub-tendencies. Some seem to explain and elucidate all the aspects of poetry, others only touch upon a specific aspect. In works which have dealt with the *paribhāṣā* (definition), *uddeśya* (purpose), *hetu* (intention of poetry), *rūpa* (the kinds of poetry), *śabda-śakti* (the power of words), *kāvyātmā* (the soul of poetry), *guṇa-doṣa* (the qualifications and disqualifications or merits and demerits of poetry), *śaili* (styles), *alaṅkāra* (figures of speech) and *chanda* (metres), etc. the following are included:

Author	*Title*
Cintāmaṇi	*Kavikula-Kalpataru*
Deva	*Śabda-Rasāyana*
Kulapati	*Rasa-Rahasya*
Dāsa	*Kāvya-Nirṇaya*
Somanātha	*Rasa-piyūṣa-nidhi*
Amirdās	*Sabhā-maṇḍana*
Kanrāj	*Kavitā-Rasa-Vinoda*

The works which discuss and detail specific aspects of poetry can be broadly classified under the following three groups:

(i) Dealing with *Rasa*

Author	*Title*
Cintamani	*Rasa-Vilāsa*
Tosha	*Sudhānidhi*
Sukhadeva Mishra	*Rasaratnākara* and *Rasārṇava*
Rasaleena	*Rasaprabodha*
Beni	*Navarasataraṅga*
Padmakara	*Jagadvinoda*
Gvala	*Rasaraṅga*
Matirama	*Rasarāja*

(ii) Dealing with *Alaṅkāra*

Author	*Title*
Matirama	*Lalita-lalāma* and *Alaṅkārapañcaśikā*
Bhushana	*Śivarāja-Bhūṣaṇa*
Gopa	*Rāmālaṅkāra*
Rasika Sumati	*Alaṅkāra Candrodaya*
Dalapatirai	*Alaṅkāra Ratnākara*
Raghunatha	*Rasika Mohana*
Padmakara	*Padmābharaṇa*

(iii) Dealing with *Chanda*

Author	*Title*
Matirama	*Vṛtta-Kaumudī*
Bhushana	*Chandohṛdayaprakāśa*
Sukhadeva Mishra	*Vṛtta-Vicāra*
Makhan	*Śrīnātha Piṅgala-Chanda vilāsa*
Dāsa	*Chandorṇava piṅgala*
Dasaratha	*Vṛtta-Vicāra*
Nandakishora	*Piṅgala Prakāśa*

Hindi has the largest number of poets and poetic compositions expounding these finer aspects of poetic discipline and techniques. No other Indian language has this type of poetry in such measure and variety.

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Kesavadasa (Keśavadāsa, 1555–1617). Son of Kashinath Mishra and *Guru* of Orchha Prince Indrajit Singh, Kesavadasa was a *Sanāḍhya* Brahmin and an erudite scholar of Sanskrit and Brajbhasha. His works include *Rasikapriyā* (1591), *Rāmacandrikā* (1601), *Kavipriyā* (1601), *Ratanbāvanī* (1607), *Virasimhadevacarita* (1607), *Vijñānagītā* (1610), *Jahangīr-Jas-Candrikā* (1612), *Nakhaśikha* and *Chandamālā*. *Rāmacandrikā* describes some important events in the Ramayana episode. Three works are bardic tributes to the kings: Ratansingh, Virsingh and Jahangir. *Vijñānagītā* is a philosophical work.

Keshavadas's special contribution is that he enlarged the scope of the analysis of *rīti*. He did not merely follow the Sanskrit tradition mechanically. He included in *Śṛṅgāra rasa* many other emotions not previously included by writers on poetics. He carried the Sanskrit discussion about figures of speech to its logical extent, even at the cost of being mocked at as 'obstruse' (*Kaṭhinakāvya ke preta*). He was the first to introduce Brajabhasha in epic form; previously it was mostly used for lyrics. He was the first to introduce dramatic dialogues in a short epic like *Rāmacandrikā*. At places his lines seem to be straight borrowings from or even translations of original Sanskrit compositions. Yet he is one of the rare medieval poets who used intellect in place of emotion; and poetry in his hands became a verbal strategy than mere spontaneous overflow of sentiments.

Rasikapriyā. This is a *riti* work. All the nine *rasas* are illustrated in it. It contains *prakāśas* or chapters; the first thirteen describe in detail the erotic emotion, the hero and heroine, sexual conditions, details of meeting and parting. In the rest of the three chapters there is description of other *rasas*, *vṛttis* and poetic fallacies (*Kāvya-doṣas*).

Kavipriyā. This is another riti work, which expounds the figures of speech. The first four chapters, out of sixteen, deal with the patron's family, poet's family, poetic fallacies and poetic forms. From chapter five to eight general figures of speech and special figures of speech are described with appropriate illustrations.

Bihari (1595–1663). Bihari (Bihārīlāl) was born in 1595 at Gwalior. He studied Sanskrit and Prakrit works at home, from his erudite father Keshava Rai. He migrated to Vrindavan, where he married a Brahmin girl. He also read Persian poetry and met Emperor Shahjahan. In 1645, he went to Jaipur to receive patronage from Raja Jaisingh. There he sent a couplet to the harem, where the king was madly in love with his very young queen: '*Nahiṁparāga nahiṁ madhura madhu*....' (There is no pollen, no sweet honey, no blooming as yet. If the bee is engrossed in a bud, what will happen in the future?) The king was so impressed that he donated a village to the poet and promised to pay one gold coin for each couplet. Bihari spent the rest of his life as a court-poet in Jaipur.

His fame rests on *Satsai*, modelled on *Gāthā-Sapta-Śa*... The late Pandit Amarnath Jha has translated some ver... out of the seven hundred *dohās* into English; Dr. Lot... Lutze has translated some into German. Dr. Grier... maintained that there is no work like *Bihārī Satsai* in t... European languages. Bihari draws sensuous Byro... images and passionate situations in groups of compa... words, and evinces an extraordinary command over figu... of speech and charming syntax. He is one of those fortun... poets of Hindi who attained the highest position of a cou... poet and earned a fortune in spite of composing only o... work of seven hundred couplets. His characteristics a... graphic pictures of beauty with utmost economy of strok... The combination of word-pictures and choice of colou... with appropriate musical associations, in his verses a... remarkable and untranslatable.

Deva (1673–1767). Deva who enjoyed the patronage o... many kings, princes and aristocrats, both Hindu a... Muslim, is credited with the authorship of 72 works; b... only fifteen out of them are now available. *Bhāva-Vilā... Premacandrikā* and *Śabda-rasāyana* are some of his impor... ant compositions. He also wrote a treatise on mus... *Devacaritra* is a long narrative on Krishna. His writin... were mostly based on Sanskrit works on poetics and w... composed between 1689 and 1767. There is a lot of repetiti... in some of the minor works. Amongst Hindi critics th... was a great controversy as to who was a greater poet—De... or Bihari. Krishna Bihari Mishra and Lala Bhagawand... took two sides; the first put forth arguments to prove De... the greater poet, while the latter thought Bihari w... superior. Both put forth evidence for and against a... Nagendra's research thesis on this poet is to date the mo... standard critical study of Deva.

Rīti poetry in Hindi is a very good example of stylin... writing and the way poets worked within the framew... of Sanskrit tradition of poetics. There is a charm, all i... own, as in miniature painting illustrating certain love te... Similarly, classical music, in its Hindustani style, h... immense variations of the permutations and combinati... of *ālāpa* and *tānavistāra* in Indian melody-based mus... Medieval poetry, particularly in Hindi, shares this w... skill and virtuosity, which the medieval painter or music... acquired and achieved in his respective fine art. Art a... artistry, creativity and craftsmanship, erudition and e... boration are so well integrated in these poetic compositi... of more than three centuries, that it is difficult to cal... mere *Rīti* poetry.

A few characteristics of the erotic versification wo... specify the above generalisation. Though Vatsyayan... *Kāmasūtra* seems to be somewhere in the subconscious... these poets, the sensuous and the blood-element has b...

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so artistically presented that nowhere have the poets' personal complexes or inhibitions obstructed the smooth flow of the poetic communication, nor does the poetry look like a treatise on eugenics or the science of sex. Partly because of the feudal age, wherein any such indulgence in extra-marital or pre-marital sex-dalliance or amorous wish-fulfilment was not considered unethical or unnatural, and partly because much of this love poetry is written in a divine context (it is mostly about Krishna, Radha and gopis), *Riti* poetry has its own abandon and delicacy. It has more descriptions of women, particularly pining for unfulfilled love and its external manifestations, than of men. So all this poetry has a feminine grace and charm as far as *śṛṅgāra* poetry is concerned.

In secular *muktaka* poems there are vignettes of domestic life too. There is the usual suspicion and jealousy, intense infatuation for the physical attraction and distraction, domestic happiness and unhappiness—all very earthy. The most interesting and enigmatic part is the freshness of this poetry, in spite of all the repetition, similarity of theme, stock situations and characters almost typified. Amongst the *Rīti* poets, some excel in describing all human emotions, while others only the erotic. Some specialize in the *samyoga* and others in *viprayoga*, the meeting and the parting of lovers. Here one finds 'emotion "reconstructed" in tranquility' and the appropriate distance between the enjoyer and the creator maintained. Poetry as an intellectual exercise, word-play and the best kind of structural arrangement of images is seen here, along with many passages of intense poetic depth and feeling as well as inimitable height and flight of imagination.

Ritimukta Kāvya (Poetry Free of Rīti). A few examples of romantic poetry free from a stylistic strait-jacket, (particularly in poems about love) are given below. The great poets of these *Rītimukta* school were Ghanananda, Alam, Bodha, Dvijadeva and others. Ghanananda was an exquisite poet of nature. It is not possible to maintain the musicality of his verse in translation. But here is one of his verses:

Rāvare rūp kī rīti anūp nayo nayo lāgat jyoṁ-jyoṁ nihāriye
tyom in āṁkhin bāni anokhi aghāni kahūṁ nāhin ān tihāriye
ek hi jiv huto su to vāryo sujān sakoc o soc sahāriye
roki rahāi na dahāi ghan ānand bāvari rījh ke hāthani hāriye

(Your beauty has such unusual form
the more one looks at it the newer it appears
These eyes are also strangely addicted
they are not satiated anywhere else, except on you
there was only one soul, which I have given to you
now you are wise enough to understand my embarrassment
I cannot control them—they are always burning,
I am completely under the spell of Love.)

Ghanananda wrote 752 verses and 1057 songs. His language is full of onomatopoeia. Two other such poets were Alam and Bodha. They are not as free as Ghanananda, as they follow some of the verse structures of *nāyikā-bheda*.

The special characteristics of this poetry, free from *rīti*, were a kind of romantic abandon, based on purely subjective choice. So Ghanananda describes the caprices of seasons in all their moods. There is no conscious effort as in Bihari, Matirama, or Padmakara. Alam and Bodha also choose images freely, sometimes quite abstract, but with unprecedented spontaneity. While the poetry of love or spiritual devotion in the *Rīti* poets was objective and followed a certain traditional pattern these poets are individualistic. Probably some of these poets in their actual life, were lovers who had strongly felt the pangs of having loved and lost. So most of their love poetry is full of tragic notes. Here the Persian influence is very clear. Feudal constraints frustrated many lovers. There was no one to share the commoner's woes, and thus there is a kind of social dissatisfaction expressed in these verses.

Poets like Ghanananda delineate nuances of love and all its struggles. The beloved is a cruel mistress. She flouts and ignores the lover's pleas. All this add to the poignancy of the passionate and 'perpetual pain' of the poet. The obstructions in the way of these lovers are poetically exploited to an advantage. For all this, language has been brought closer to its spoken and colloquial form. Although they borrow extensively from folk-maxims and proverbs, rural and pastoral images, they do not shun Persian words. From the days of Akbar, the court-poets did not live apart from less recognised poets but there was great dialogue between the two with the result that these Hindi poets benefited. They chose whatever elements they found suitable for the kind of poetry in which they excelled. Ghanananda's long poem *Iśq-latā* has so many Persianisms. The fact that the last line in a *kavitta* or *savaiyā* composed at this time has a greater element of surprise and effectiveness, is due to the influence of Persian metrical compositions like *kubāī* or *śair*.

Ghanananda wasa *mīr-munśi* (head clerk) of Muhammad Shah and a scholar of Persian. His *Viyoga Veli* has a Persian verse as its base. Yet the beauty of his writing lies in the way he has metamorphosed the Persian influence to make it his own. In Alam, the 'Persian style has obstructed the free flow of *rasa*', is what Ramachandra Shukla opined. These poets tried to establish an indelible stamp of their own in the traditional style of composing poetry, adopting the best of Persian.

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The Continuation of Devotional Poetry. The early *Saguṇa* devotional poetry which had its efflorescence in the *Rāma kāvyas* of Tulasidasa and *Kṛṣṇakāvya* of Suradasa or the writings of Keshavadasa, continued in this century also. The *Nirguṇa* school of Kabir, Dadu, Raidas and their followers and advocates were Yari Saheb (c. 1700), Darya Saheb (1664–1780), Jagajivanadas (1670–1761), Charanadasa (1703–82), Shivanarayan (1716–91), Guru Tegh Bahadur (1622–75) who was a Sikh, Anandaghana a Jain and Prananatha (1618–94) who started his own cult. All of them wrote excellent philosophical poetry. There is a poetess named Sahajobai (1743) who wrote:

Ciuṅti jahāṁ na cadhi sakai, sarasoṁ na thaharāi
Sahajo kūṁ vā des meṁ, satguru dai basāi
(Where even an ant cannot climb, where not a mustard can grow, Sahajo was rehabilitated in that land by Sad-Guru.)
Her Guru was Charanadasa.

Kasimsah, Nurmuhamad (1744–66 was the period of his composition), Sheikh Nazir, were some of the Muslim poets who wrote in a Sufi style. They wrote long allegorical love-tales with spiritual significance.

Amongst the poets who wrote excellent poems on Rama were Guru Gobindsingh (1669–1708), the Sikh scholar, warrior and organiser. His *Gobind Rāmāyaṇ* is a work in Brajbhasha, widely read and sung. There was a Muslim poet in 1750 called Rasik-Ali who wrote a work *Mithilāvihāra* about Rama's reaching Janakpur. It combines in the descriptions of beauty, the *Rīti* skills of poets who wrote about Radha and Krishna, with intense *bhakti* or devotion for Rama. There were many other minor poets also.

Krishna seems to be the main object of devotion. Both long narratives in epic style and lyrical poetry have been written upon Krishna lore. Guman Mishra of Mahoba wrote *Kṛṣṇa-Candrikā* in 1781, and Brajavasidasa wrote *Braj-bilās* (1770), Manchit wrote a *Kṛṣṇāyaṇa*.

As far as lyrical, muktaka compositions are concerned, Nagaridasa (1699– ?) has composed *Iśqcaman* and some *kavittas* on the rainy season. But everywhere Radha is the main point of interest. Albeli Ali of the Vishnuswami cult, wrote *padas* full of alliteration and word-music. Hitavrndavanadasa, Bhagavat Rasika, Baksi Hansraj Srivastava (who adopted the feminine pen-name Prem-sakhī) and Manjaridasa are some other Krishna poets of the late 18th century. There was a poetess named Sundari Kumvar Bai. She wrote ten volumes of poetry from 1760 to 1796.

This devotional poetry has its own charm. It was not a total imitation of the Sanskrit texts. Nor were they transcreations of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* or *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, but had used the myths only as a base. The imagination of the poets and poetesses were given free rein. They are also remarkably free of the moralistic, preaching element. S[illegible] *Nīti* poets are entirely different from *Rīti* poets.

Poetic tradition, free of *rīti*, had great variety and vivac[illegible] This was in reality the beginning of later romantic poet[illegible] Some kind of an after-effect of the devotional tradition [illegible] there, but the poets were trying to emancipate themsel[illegible] and their poetry from the tangles of all the earlier restrict[illegible] which such a conventional manner of writing imposes. [illegible] as stylization had reached a saturation point. Reaction to [illegible] was natural.

Historic Poetry. After the earliest bardic poetry of Cha[illegible] Bardai of the 12th century, one does not come across su[illegible] pure heroic poetry as is available in the 18th century. [illegible] seems that the two strands of the erotic and the heroic kin[illegible] of poetry had now started asserting themselves separate[illegible] and found their own identity. In the *Rīti* heroic poetry, the[illegible] are two different styles:

Styles	*Poets*
(i) Epics (*prabandha-kāvya*)	Lal, Padmakar, Sudan, Khuman, Jodhraj
(ii) Lyrics (*Muktaka*)	Bhushan, Baṅki-das

Lal. Gorelal Purohit 'Lal Kavi' lined at the end of 16[illegible] century and belonged to Mauranipur (Bundelkhand). H[illegible] has written an epic named *Chatra Prakāśa* giving the bio[illegible] graphy of king Chatrasal in *dohācaupāi* style. This wo[illegible] gives historical details correctly. The chronology of the kin[illegible] the valiant deeds of Champaka Rai and Chatrasal a[illegible] described in detail. His word-pictures are very graphic.

Padmakar Bhatta. He was a Telenga Brahmin, born [illegible] Banda in 1753. He got a *jāgīr* from Jaipur-naresh Maharaj[illegible] Pratap Singh and also the title of '*Kavirāja Śiromaṇi*'. H[illegible] went in 1792 to another patron Himmat Bahadur a[illegible] wrote a long panegyric on him. He spent his last days ne[illegible] the Ganges, at Kanpur and died at the age of eighty. H[illegible] command over powerful words and his descriptions [illegible] heroes and battles are unique.

Sudan. He was a Mathur Chaube from Mathura and [illegible] living under the patronage of the Raja of Bharatpur, Su[illegible] Singh alias Surajmal. Sudan composed *Sujān-Carit*, a lo[illegible] poem giving the descriptions of the wars between 1745 a[illegible] 1753. It has got seven wars (*jaṅg*) as its basis. Each *jaṅg* h[illegible] many acts (*aṅkas*). At times his love of alliteration ov[illegible] powers his other qualities. For example, in describing [illegible] power of Surajmal, he indulges in hyperbole.

Khuman. He was a bard by caste and lived at the palace [illegible]

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Raja Vikram Shah of Charkhari (Bundelkhand). In 1822 he wrote *Nṛsiṁha-Caritra* under the pseudonym 'Mān'. He had also composed *Lakṣmaṇaśataka* in which the war between Lakṣmaṇa and Meghanāda was described in very powerful terms.

Jodhraj. He was a poet from Alwar district (U.P.). He composed Hammir Rasau (1818). Hammir was a king in the line of Prthviraja, who defeated Sultan Allauddin many times. Here historical veracity is welded with poetic excellence.

Bhusan. Bhusan Tripathi was in the court of Chatrasal. He wrote a work on Shivaji in the form of a work on figures of speech, entitled *Śivrāj-Bhūṣaṇ*. In writing *Śivā-Bāvanī* (52 heroic couplets on Shivaji) and *Chatrasāl-Daśak* (ten lyrics on Chatrasal) he earned his great reputation. These are best examples of heroic poetry in the *Rīti*-Age. *Śivā-Bāvanī* is a work of national pride. He describes the guerilla troops of Shivaji in a stanza like this:

bhūṣaṇ bhanet terī himmat kahāṁ lauṁ kahauṁ
kimmati yahāṁ hai lagī jaki bhat jot meṁ
tāv de mūṁchan kaṅguran pai on de de
ari-mukh ghāv de de kūdi parī kot meṁ

(Bhushan says [O Shivaji] how long shall I describe your valour, it is now being dearly weighted in this clash of warriors. With one hand curling the moustache, setting every foot firmly on the ramparts of a fort, wounding the faces of the enemy [your soldiers] jumped inside the fort walls under the seige.)

Bankidas. Born in the village Bhadiavas in Marwar, in 1771, in a bard's family, he was considered the *guru* of the Maharaja of Jodhpur, Mansingh. Bankidas died at the age of sixty-two. He composed two poems: *Sūr-Chattīsī* and *Vir-Vinod*.

Comparing early heroic poetry of the Dingal, a variety of old Rajasthani, with these compositions in Brajbhasha, one finds greater sophistication. The earlier poetry was not so historically valid, as it was full of fancy and free play of imagination. It was mostly in epics and long narratives. But heroic poetry of this age is more in the form of lyrics. This was partly to fulfil the *Rīti* tradition. The poets of this period have used a variety of metre-forms and thus brought a change in bardic style.

The earlier heroic poetry was mostly panegyric. The patrons were kings and the poets took pleasure in describing their exploits. The compositions concentrate their attention on individual portraiture of the ruling princes and very little is known from those poems about the social life of that time. In the *Rīti* age-heroic verses, which are not at all composed by poets of the bardic caste, poetry pre dominates. Some critics think that Bhushan translated on the emotional plane what Shivaji did in the field of action. Love for one's motherland was manifest in Chand and Prithviraj, but it took a more literary and succint form in Bhushan, Lal, Sudan and others. Now these poets acted as mass-media agents; they propagated the message of the national heroes far and wide. They were not only well-versed in the arts of peace and war, but also had a sure command over their form of expression. Their choice of words, compactness, creating an atmosphere with deft strokes and usage of different metres according to the mood necessary for the theme, show that the heroic poetry in this age had achieved equal heights as the erotic one.

Didactic Poetry. The third strand was of didactic poetry, It has an earlier tradition in the form of *dohās* and *sākhīs* of the Nirguṇa school of poets like Kabir, or even in the compositions of a court-poet like Rahim. Modelled on Bhartrihari's *Nīti śataka* and *Subhāṣitas* in Sanskrit, such pithy, moralistic, wise sayings and counsels had a different role.

The Bhakti Period had three forms of didactic poetry: (i) Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and other saints wrote poetic precepts and moral observations as part of their literary work; (ii) in *mahākāvyas* or epics like *Rāmacaritamānasa* by Tulasidasa and *Padmāvat* by Jayasi, there are moralistic passages; (iii) exclusively didactic poets, mostly Jains like Padmanābh (*Dungarbāvanī*, 1486), *Ṭhākur Sī* (1523-26 was the date of his poetic compositions). But amongst the non-Jains, Chihal Agrawal wrote *Chihal Bāvanī* (1527). Ratnavali, the wife of Tulasidasa is attributed to have written 111 *dohās*, mainly preaching celibacy and sexual restraint.

Devidas, the vaisya minister of Rao Lunkaran of Shekhavati, wrote *Rājanīti ke kavitta* (poems on politics) in Brajabhasha. A contemporary of Devidas was Jamal, a Muslim from Rajasthan, whose *Dohāvalī* dated 1570 has such verses as:

pūnam cand kusumbh raṅg, nadī tīr, drum ḍāl
ret bhīt bhūs lipāno, ye thir nahiṁ jamāl
(Full moon, vegetable hues, river bank, twig of a tree sand wall, coating of chaff, Jamal says they are never permanent, you see.)

Udairaj, whose *dohās* are in *Guṇabāvanī* (1603), Dadu's disciple Wajid, Banarasidas (1586) and Rājsamudra (1590) are some of the Jain didactic poets.

The most interesting among them were the court poets of Akbar like Mahapatra Narahari (1505-1607) and Rahim Khankhana (1556-1638). Rahim was a polyglot and a very great master of versification. *Nagarśobha* by him contains descriptions of women of various professions and regions. His didactic verses have great poetic excellence.

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In the same tradition, the didactic poetry of *Rīti* age is composed by Vrinda, Giridhar Kavirai, Baital, Samman, Ramsahai Das, Dindayal Giri and others. These poets were writing in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Vrinda was a poet from Medka (Jodhpur, Rajasthan), who wrote his seven hundred couplets—*Satsai*—in c. 1704. Some of his verses are very fine aphorisms, being based directly on Sanskrit compositions of the same kind.

Giridhar Kavirai wrote his six-line *kuṇḍaliyās* in 1743. These contain the quintessence of worldly wisdom. Based on everyday observations and robust common sense, Giridhar gives ethical advice on several matters as to how an individual should behave in his own caste, village, family, community, court and so on. Giridhar is a factual versifier. Vrinda uses figures of speech and poetic techniques. Giridhar has no such pretensions, nor does he exhibit any erudition. But his direct, simple, homely homilies have a wide effect on the common listener and reader. In his poems the term *Sāi* (Master) occurs at many places. Some scholars think these were the compositions of his wife.

Baital was a bard in the court of Bikram Shah of Charkhari, who wrote his *kuṇḍaliyās* sometime between 1782 and 1829. He has said in one of his poems that, 'If these persons die, one need not mourn: a Brahmin who dies because of drinking, the son who puts the family to shame and the king who is unjust'. Samman was a Brahmin who wrote *dohās*, popular amongst the villagers. Ramsahaidas was a Kayastha of Banaras, who composed seven hundred couplets, with his pen-name 'Ram' in many verses. Dindayalgiri of Kashi (b. 1802) wrote an excellent didactic treatise called *Anyokti-Kalpadruma*. While earlier didactic poetry was used mostly for devotional purposes, here poetry is the medium of secular moral preaching only.

Epics and Narratives. In the Bhakti Period there were many epics and long narrative poems written in Awadhi, Brajbhasha and other dialects of Hindi; the most important among them relate the story of Rama or Krishna, in some form or the other. These sagas are considerably improvised and are not direct or straight translations of the Sanskrit epics of Valmiki or Vyasa. In the bardic period, in *Pṛthvīrāja Rāsau*, there is a description of ten *avatāras* or incarnations of Vishnu. There are 38 verses devoted to Rama. Vishnudasa was another important poet before Tulasidasa who wrote about Rama and Krishna. Ishvaradasa wrote in 1501 a narrative named *Bharat Milāp*.

Nabhadasa wrote *Bhaktamāl* in 1596, but it is a biographical dictionary of several devotees.

Among other poets who wrote epics and narratives about Rama were Premchand Chauhan, who in his *Rāmāyaṇa Mahānāṭaka* (1610) told the story of the Ramayana in the form of a verse-dialogue. Madhavdas Charan wrote *Rāmrāo* (1618) and *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* (1624), mostly based on Sanskrit texts. So was *Hanumannāṭaka* (1623) of Hridayarama from Punjab. Narahari Barhat wrote *Pauruṣeya Rāmāyaṇa*, meaning thereby that while Valmiki's composition is by a superhuman being, this Ramayana is written by a *puruṣa* (a common man).

The transition from the medieval to the modern was not smooth. North India was constantly exposed to internal feuds and battles for power, apart from political upheavals, great famines and mass killings (as in the case of Taimurlane or Nadirshah's invasions). Yet poetry continued to flow like a river, unaffected by what was happening on its banks. There is nothing very remarkable to note in the 18th century as far as traditional Hindi poetry is concerned. We see that this tradition also affected the poets in the 19th century those who wrote in Brajbhasha, and who are considered pioneers of the modern period in Hindi poetry, like the great Bhāratendu Hariścandra (1850–85) of Banaras.

Conclusion: An Overall Assessment

After surveying the poetic achievement of Hindi from its dawn to the modern age, from Sarahapada to Bharatendu Harischandra, one can easily comprehend its panoramic range. Hindi poetry touches all aspects of life: nature, human relationships, family life, religion, politics and philosophy. It is both secular and spiritual, erotic and heroic, classical as well as romantic, epic and lyrical. Its vast field includes poets from all castes and creeds: from Harijans like Raidas to kings like Prithviraj and courtiers like Rahim, Brahmins and Vaisyas, Kayasthas and Kshatriyas. The compositions are in at least a dozen varieties of spoken Hindi, now called sub-languages of Hindi: Dingal, Maithili, Rajasthani, Mewari, Bhojpuri, Sadhukkari, Hindustani, Avadhi, Braj, Bundeli, Nimari, Chattisgarhi, Gwaliari and Khariboli. Some of them have now written and printed literature as in Maithili, Rajasthani and Khariboli.

The sources of this poetry are varied, in the sense that wandering mendicants used it, devotees in monasteries and temples sung it, musicians set their *rāgas* to compositions in these languages, bards have accompanied their heroes to battlefields and given poetic reportages, some passionate lovers and beloveds have written poetry in it to re-create the sweet memories of their meetings and partings, some old-wise cracks have used it for sermons and gospels, many have played with the language to while away leisure by literary exercises and some have even constructed brain teasers and riddles. With such variety and multifaceted aspects of the poetry of a thousand years and more, it is risky to describe it by one blanket appellation or categorize it under one general canopy.

Broadly speaking, four strands are clear:

(i) The Divine Quest of the Absolute;
(ii) Worship of the Deity in human form;

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(iii) Extolling the virtues of the patron as a hero; and
(iv) Celebrating the joys and sorrows of common life.

Some poets have tried their hand at all these kinds of philosophical, hymnal, bardic-panegyric and purely lyrical and social poetry. Some have specialized in one branch and treated others as secondary. Still others have mainly chosen one or the other sentiments for specialization: erotic, heroic, tragic, humorous (*śṛṅgāra, vīra, karuṇa, hāsya*) or other moods as their forte.

Kabir's *bāni* inspired Tagore, Tulasidasa was translated into French, Russian, Italian, German and English (three translations by Hill, Grouse and Atkins are in English alone), Vidyapati inspired Sri Aurobindo, Mirabai was translated by Raghu Vira into English and Suradasa's *padas* appeared in selections in Russian. The Hindi saint-poets had their impact all over India.

Traditional Hindi poetry covering not only many centuries, but a large area of the midland in the heart of India, has made a very significant contribution to our cultural heritage. Homer said 'For poetry, the two things are: the one is love and the other is war'. Indian aestheticians added *karuṇa* (tragedy) as the third important sentiment. Hindi poetry, as we have seen, in this rather sketchy survey, abounds in the portrayals of these three basic human instincts. There were poets like Vidyapati, Bihari and Deva, who excelled in etching man-woman love in all its stages and vicissitudes; there were poets like Chand Bardai and Jagnik who revelled in describing wars and battles with all their war-cries and sabre-rattling. There were great devotional poets like Tulasidasa, Suradasa, Kabir, Mirabai and Nazir, who with their epics, hymns, lyrics, folk-ballads, psalms and cryptic aphoristic ditties—enlarged not only the canvas and conspectus of Hindi poetry, but qualitatively too, gave it unique depth and height. Some of these poets have rightly been included in the *Representative Works of East and West* in the UNESCO series. They have been translated into several Indian languages and also languages beyond India. They are priceless gems of the corpus of what Goethe called *Welt literature* (World literature). They have influenced the common man (who may be even unlettered) by their music and meaning, rhythm and resonance, spiritual and secular tones, simplicity and spontaneity of style and structure. It is all the more a marvel, because many of these poets had no formal education, some of them were unlettered and even handicapped (like Suradasa), persecuted and calumnized, politically never holding any power or position of prestige. And, yet, by sheer poetic talent, they have carved an eternal niche in the galaxy of immortals in medieval literature.

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Kannada

PRABHU SHANKARA

By traditional poetry is meant the literary form called the *Campu*, written in verse interspersed with prose—which is called the *Campu* style—either in *Vṛttas* (metres) borrowed from Sanskrit or in indigenous metres like the *tripadi*, *ragaḷe*, *ṣatpadi* and *sāṅgatya*. Folk poetry is, therefore excluded from this section.

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(i) Inscriptional Literature. The original source of Kannada poetry traceable to the stone inscriptions of Karnataka, the first of them being the Halmiḍi inscription of about A. D. 450. Some other inscriptions of poetic interest belong to c. A.D. 700, two of which having prosodic value may also be cited here. The Śrāvaṇa beḷagoḷa inscription of A.D. 700, relating to the great Jain monk Nandisēna, bears a verse in the *Vṛtta* metre:

> Like the rainbow, like the wavy web fretted on the heavens by the tongues of lightning, and like the mist, heaps of riches, immense beauty and great glory appear for a moment and disappear instantly. They do not stay long with anyone. Valuing as I do the ultimate end, I will not remain here on this earth. So resolving, did Nandisēna, the great ascetic, embrace *sanyāsa* and attained the world of the gods. (tr.)

The Bādāmi inscription (c. A.D. 700), which eulogizes a certain Arabhaṭṭa as a matchless hero, carries verses in the native *Tripadi* metre. One verse runs thus:

> Sādhuge Sādhu mādhuryaṅge mādhuryan bādhippa
> Kalige Kaliyugaviparītan mādhavanītanperanalla

> Mild to him that was mild, sweet-tempered to him that was sweet-tempered, he was yet a terrible foe to the troublemaker; he was Madhava himself and none else. (tr.)

(ii) Kavirājamārga. *Kavirājamārga*, the first extant Kannada work and an important landmark in Kannada literary history, is a work on rhetoric written by either Amōghavarṣa Nṛpatuṅga (814–877), the Rāṣṭrakūṭa emperor, or Śrī Vijaya, his court poet. Employing *Kandas* (4 line-composition), *Varṇa Vṛttas* (metres measured in syllables), *Ślokas* and the native metre called *Gītika*, the author has in this work made an attempt to adapt the *Kāvyālaṅkāra* of Bhāmaha and the *Kāvyādarśa* of Daṇḍin into Kannada. The author is not just a translator, but a writer with originality and poetic sensibility.

What has made *Kavirājamārga* a work of great importance is its wealth of references to prose writers and poets who had flourished earlier. Vimala and Udaya (or perhaps Vimalōdaya), Nāgārjuna, Jayabandhu and Durvinīta are said to have written prose works, while Śrī Vijaya and Kavīśvara (or perhaps Śrīvijaya Kavīśvara), Paṇḍita and Candra (or perhaps Paṇḍitacandra), and Lōkapāla are stated to have written poetical works.

Pampa and His Age

Pampa (c. 941). Pampa, the earliest Kannada poet and the first of the Ratna-traya (Three Gems), established the tradition of writing two epics—one secular, the other spiritual. These two epics, the *Ādipurāṇa* and the *Vikramārjuna Vijaya* are fortunately available in their entirety.

Pampa belonged to an age (10th and 11th centuries) when Karnataka saw a number of political vicissitudes. Two major dynasties ruled Karnataka and several wars were fought both on and around this country's soil. The period is called *Vīrayuga* (the age of heroism). The spirit of the age is very well reflected in the literary works of these two centuries. Most of the major poets of this age were Jains.

Pampa is not merely the first but also the foremost of our poets, who has influenced many a later poet. His fame had, in his own time, crossed the boundaries of Karnataka. He seems to have influenced Nannaya (c. 1040), who gave to Telugu literature its first Mahabharata.

The Ādipurāṇa. The epic narrates the past lives and the present life of Vṛṣabha Dēva, the first of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras. Its religious technicalities may appear dry to non-Jains. As the subject does not admit of free invention or original creation of characters or incidents, even the most talented poet would feel cramped in the strait-jacket of religious dogma. It is a measure of Pampa's genius that despite all these limitations, he succeeded in creating an epic of perennial poetic value.

Pampa's source, Jinasēna's *Pūrva Pūraṇa* in Sanskrit runs into forty-two cantos. Pampa has reduced it to sixteen chapters, and has thus turned matter-of-fact accounts into narratives of poetic excellence. Condensation and economy being his forte, he can say in a few words what others would need pages to narrate. His economy makes an indelible mark on the mind.

While Pampa is faithful to his source, his alert poetic vision discovers poetic situations, presenting them in appropriate settings and making them gorgeous in the floodlight of his imagination.

In this epic, Pampa has succeeded to a great extent in achieving the intended harmony of 'Kāvya dharma' and 'dharma'—the spirit of poetry and righteousness. What would have been a narrow, dogmatic treatise in the hands of lesser poets has been transformed into one of the masterpieces of Kannada literature.

Vikramārjuna Vijaya. Pampa's *Vikramārjuna Vijaya*, which is acclaimed as the *Pampabhārata*, is the Kannada version of Vyāsa's Mahabharata. It is a matter of pride to Kannadigas that Kannada was the very first of Indian regional languages in which Vyāsa's great epic found reincarnation. Pampa being a Jaina, the Mahabharata was for him after all a secular work. The motivating principle in writing this epic was Pampa's pardonable ambition to immortalize the affection and regard lavished upon him by his patron-friend Arikēsari II of the Chalukyan dynasty, whom he has identified with Arjuna. This venture obliged him to make a radical departure from his original, which

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inevitably led to glaring oddities and inconsistencies. For example, he felt called upon to reject Draupadi's polyandry, for would it not be a slur on the honour of the queen and, therefore, of his patron himself? As the hero of the poem, Arjuna had to be the victor in the Mahabharata war, and the crown had to be his. Alas for Yudhishthira!

Such, however, is the magic of Pampa's genius that this masterpiece makes one forget all such flaws and reveals all the facets of human nature even like Vyāsa's mighty creation. Pampa has justly described himself as *hitamita-mṛdu-vacanan*, one whose words are at once very few, soft and pleasing. Exploiting all the potentialities of Kannada language, and blending the native savour of Kannada with the sonorousness of Sanskrit, the poet has made of his work an epic of supreme excellence.

With the masterly economy characteristic of the truly great poet, Pampa has dealt with the Śantanu-Satyavati encounter in just one *vṛtta*. He has made a bold innovation intended to show the magnitude of the intimacy Duryōdhana allowed his friend Karṇa, and of the liberties that the latter could take even with his patron's wife. This episode is found in Sri Villiputtur's Tamil Mahabharata also. Here is Pampa's narration of the incident, where Karṇa, explaining to Sri Krishna his firm refusal to desert his high-minded master, says:

> When in a dice match Bhānumati lost to me, I teased her to pay the forfeit, and (her) pearl necklace got torn (as I seized it). The magnanimous king, shaking with repeated peals (of laughter) at the plight of the (poor) pearls, asked us, 'Tell me, (my dears), shall I gather them all up?' If I do not cleave to him, but desert him and join your party, would I not be a (wretched) (fortune-) hunter? (tr.)

Pampa's mastery of narration, his description of nature, and his use of both classical and purely dialectic language with equal ease, have together earned him the honour of being the pace-setter for Kannada poetry for the next one thousand years.

Ponna (c. 950). Ponna is the second of the 'Ratna-traya', (Three Gems) of Kannada literature. Among his four works *Śāntipurāṇa*, *Bhuvanaika Rāmābhyuḍaya*, *Gata-pratyāgata* and *Jinakṣaramāle*, only the first and the last are now available.

Śāntipurāṇa is an epic in the *Campu* style based on the story of Śāntinātha, the 16th Tīrthaṅkara. Ponna calls his work *Purāṇa-cūḍāmaṇi* (the crest-jewel among epics), and even claims superiority over Kalidasa, his works belying this claim. There are suggestions of genuine poetry in his epic. For a lover of poetry there are famous saws and sayings, both Sanskrit and Kannada, which are naturalized by the poet and made his own. To quote a couple of them:

> If the mother's milk itself should turn into poison
> who can save (the baby)?
> The mendicant-priestess, who herself begs, turns (her idol)
> Benaka (Vināyaka) too into a beggar. (tr.)

Ponna's *Jinākṣaramāle* is a specimen of poetic acrobatics.

Nāgavarma (c. 990). Nāgavarma's *Karnātaka Kādambari* is the Kannada version in excellent verse, of Bāṇabhatta's Sanskrit *Kādambarī*, which is in ornate prose. Bāṇa's description of the passion-charged mind of Mahāśvētā, on her way to her rendezvous with her lover Puṇḍarīka is as follows:

> This Madana (Cupid), this spring season, this fragrant spicy breeze, and this (wretched) sinner of a Moon, the killer that he is, are all ranged on one side. On the other side is this (poor) heart of mine, stricken with insupportable passion, which cannot withstand (their joint onslaught). (tr.)

Now for Nāgavarma's poetic rendering—

> With the Spring on one side, the scented breeze on the other,
> And swarms of honey-seeking bees and bands of infatuated koils on all sides,
> (Night) reigns supreme.
> Rising (above the horizon), this killer, the Moon, has shown up.
> Ah me, I am undone! This fever, Cupid-caused,
> Is raging in the depths of my heart. (tr.)

It is generally agreed that Bāṇa's prose is complex and his sentences run occasionally into several paragraphs, if not pages. But Nāgavarma seeks to simplify the original and make it accessible to the less erudite. His poetic medium has helped him in achieving his objective. The story, the characters, and the supremacy of pure love, all of which were rather obscure in the original, have been depicted with enviable vividness by Nāgavarma. Nothing of the essence or the charm of the original is lost. Innumerable examples can be cited to show his superb artistry in painting word-pictures.

Ranna (c. 993). The principal works of Ranna, the last of the Ratna-traya, are *Ajita-Tīrthaṅkara-Purāṇa-Tilaka* and *Sāhasa Bhīma-Vijaya;* the latter is better known by its alternative title of *Gadāyuddha*. In composing these two *Campu* epics, Ranna followed the footsteps of his two elders by proclaiming in the first, the supremacy of his own Jaina faith and revealing in the second, his unalloyed poetic excellence in dealing with a purely secular theme. The themes of his *Paraśurāma-Carita* and *Cakrēśvara-Carita*

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are still involved in controversy, while *Ranna-Kanda*, a Kannada lexicon, supposed to be Ranna's work, is available only in an incomplete form.

The major part of *Ajita-Purāṇa* is devoted to the story of Ajitanātha, the second Tīrthaṅkara, and the rest, from the ninth to the twelfth cantos, to the story of Sagara, a great devotee of Ajitanātha.

In his *Sāhasa-Bhīma-Vijaya* (Victory of Bhima, the Valiant), Ranna immortalized his own royal patron Satyāśraya by identifying him with Bhīma of the Mahabharata, who was to him the hero, par excellence, of that epic. By doing so, instead of learning by Pampa's error, he made the same mistakes. Yet his brilliant poetic genius has, like a mighty shield, saved his poem from serious damage, placed it securely among the Kannada epics.

Sāhasa-Bhīma-Vijaya, is an elaboration of but one Āśvāsa of Pampa's work. The situation itself (the defeat and death of a mighty emperor) being charged with emotion, this poem gave full scope to Ranna's poetic as well as dramatic genius. The passage where Duryōdhana, the sole survivor among the Kauravas, is waylaid and stopped on the corpse-strewn battlefield by grotesque female apparitions (maruḷs) who smack their lips in horrible glee in anticipation of the royal feast waiting for them, is charged with drama and is a unique instance of *bībhatsa* (horror) turned into the handmaid of *karuṇa* (pity).

Ranna's power of characterization is as great as his dramatic skill. But, in his enthusiasm to extol the virtues of Duryōdhana, Ranna seems to forget that he is the antagonist in his epic, styling him repeatedly as *mahānubhāva*, the magnanimous soul. Here is a famous stanza (often cited as a marvellous instance of *dhvani* or suggestion, which is the principal characteristic of great poetry) where both the combatant heroes spring to life.

Standing on the margin of Lake Vaiśampāyana, the Pāṇḍavas try in vain to draw Duryōdhana out by their taunts. But the insults hurled by Bhīma, his hated foe, sting him and he rushes out. This momentous event finds magnificent expression in these lines:

This roar (of Bhīma) which worsted the lion's roar
And suppressed the very rumbling of the rolling thunder,
The serpent-bannered Duryōdhana heard;
And, eyes bloodshot with his rising rage,
He was bathed in sweat in the very waters cold. (tr.)

Durgasimha (c. 1031). Durgasimha's Kannada *Pañcatantra* is important not only because of its literary value but because of its special value to the historian of every Indian literature. For the author claims that his source was Vasubhāgabhaṭṭa's Sanskrit *Pañcatantra*, composed of five stories drawn from Guṇāḍhya's *Bṛhatkathā* in Paiśāci, a veritable treasure-house of stories. But Durgasimha has also borrowed a few stories from Viṣṇuśarma's work, the only Sanskrit *Pañcatantra* now available. Hence it is only from those elements of Durgasimha's Kannada version, not borrowed from Viṣṇuśarma, that Durgasimha's acknowledged original source, namely Vasubhāgabhaṭṭa's work, can be reconstructed.

Durgasimha is excellent as a story-teller. The verses of his *Campu* are Sanskrit-dominated, but the Kannada passages are in excellent prose, simple, lucid and appealing. Himself a follower of the Vedic tradition, Durgasimha has revealed his catholicity by including some valuable aspects of Jainism in his work.

Nāgacandra (c. 1100). *Rāmacandracarita Purāṇa*, by Nāgacandra, is a major landmark in the history of the Kannada epic, as the theme of the poem is the Ramayana story as told in the Jain tradition. It is a surprising coincidence that, like Pampa who gave to the Kannada people their first Mahabharata, Nāgacandra who gave them their first Ramayana should also be a Jain. But the fundamental difference between the two poets is that, while Pampa followed the classical tradition to a considerable extent, Nāgacandra, who came to be hailed as 'Abhinava Pampa' (New Pampa), followed the Jain tradition. Another surprising coincidence is that, even as the first poet to re-create the Sanskrit Mahabharata in one of the Indian languages was a Kannada poet, it is possible that the first poet to bring the Ramayana into a regional language was also a Kannada poet.

Nāgacandra's sources are the *Pa-u-ma Cariya*, a Prakrit work of Vimalasūri, Raviṣēna's *Padma Purāṇa* and, of course, Vālmiki's Ramayana. But there are abundant instances which reveal his originality. One such scene—the scene of Sīta's abduction—may perhaps be briefly summarized.

Rāvaṇa beheld Sīta resplendent like the dazzling lightning; he saw only milk, not the rod that lay by its side.

With a snare to the eye
And diamond-fetters to the heart
Like the (divinely) beautiful Janaki
Before the field of vision,
His (Rāvaṇa's) mind grew restless
Like the water-drop on the lotus-leaf. (tr.)

Nāgacandra has portrayed Rāvaṇa as a person of uncommon self-control. How could such a person abduct Sīta? The poet answers: 'Does not the ocean itself transgress its boundaries under Time's influence?' Several such philosophic and poetic utterances can be found in Nāgacandra. When Rāvaṇa seeks the aid of the 'Avalōkinī' power to enchant Sīta, that power admonishes him thus: 'If the ocean itself begins to boil, where can one find water cold enough to cool the boiling ocean?'

Kanti (c. 1100). Kanti, according to a popular tradition, was the first poetess of Kannada literature. 'Kanti' is not

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proper name, but a term meaning a Jain nun. A contest between her and the poet Nāgacandra, also known as Hampa, is reported in an anthology called *Kanti Hampana Samasyegaḷu*.

Nayasēna (c. 1112). *Dharmāmṛta* (Nectar of Dharma) is the poem of Nayasēna who has styled himself variously as Nayasēna-munīndra, Nayasēna-budha and Nayasēna-dēva. It is a *Campu* of fourteen cantos, relating fourteen stories illustrative of the fourteen virtues of Jainism. A Jain himself, he satirizes the Vedic religion here and there in a refined manner. He has revealed his skill in appropriately adopting popular proverbs and similes. His sense of humour has earned for him the name of 'Nagegāra' ('the laughing spirit).

A certain Brahmin, called Vasubhūti accepts the Jain vows from purely mercenary motives. His condition while he was undergoing the Jain practice of *lōcu* (plucking one's own hair, one by one, suffering the excruciating pain, without giving any sign of pain, and trying to look as if one were really enjoying the experience) is pictured thus:

Trembling like a shepherd mounted on horseback,
Or feeling feverish like the farmer who has given
A loan but has no evidence.... (tr.)

Among Kannada poets with an awareness of the conditions of the contemporary society, Nayasēna was the foremost. Noteworthy are these words of a critic, M. Chidananda Murthy, about his work (cf. *Samśōdhaṅa*, vol. 2, 1970, pp. 92, 97, 99):

A *campu* in form, Dharmāmṛta is in spirit a folk poem..... Rare it is to find in one single work the entire life of the contemporary people mirrored in this degree. (tr.)

The Vacanakāras and Their Age

(i) The Age of Revolution. The 10th and 11th centuries were the Heroic Age of Kannada literature and the following three centuries, its Age of Revolution. The radical transformation brought about by the Vacanakāras (the authors of *vacanas*, poetic-prose composition) and their successors—in literature, in religion and in society—had wrought a veritable revolution. Literature underwent a total change both in subject and in style. Kings and wars as well as epic themes yielded place to the lives of ancient and contemporary mystics and saints. Literary composition, *by* the common people, *for* the common people and *in* the common language, brought literature down from her royal pedestal, to the people's very doorstep.

The Vacanakāras were principally religious missionaries and social reformers. The *Vacana*, the new literary form they invented, was but a handmaid to them. This formidable band, composed of the learned and the unlearned, transcended all barriers of caste, creed, or sex. They used the similes and metaphors and imagery of everyday speech as well as of their various trades, making their sayings as vigorous as they were homely. No wonder their message permeated the lowliest strata of society.

(ii) The Vacanakāras. Vīraśaivism, to which Basavēśvara (popularly known as Basavaṇṇa) of the 12th century gave a new momentum, proclaimed that all who wore the *iṣṭa-liṅga* (the linga symbol given to the disciple by the Guru) upon their person were equal, irrespective of caste or community, sex or occupation. A great many mystics of the sect congregated in the 'Anubhava Maṇṭapa' set up by Basavaṇṇa at Kalyāṇa. Vīraśaivism too preached *Bhakti*, *Jñāna* and *Vairāgya* (non-attachment), and all ethical values. A *samaya* (convention) was established that everyone, be he an aspirant or a realized soul, should live by his bodily labour (kāyaka). The spiritual longings and experiences of these mystics found expression in simple prose, often tinged with poetry. A few specimens of these *Vacanas*, which gave a new direction to the stream of Kannada poetry, are given here.

A *Vacana* of Allama Prabhu, the *Jñāna-yōgi*, and supreme preceptor of the group:

Laying knowledge in the cradle of Ignorance,
Swung by the ropes of the Vedic lore,
Mother Illusion rocks the baby,
Crooning her (sweet) lullaby.
Unless the cradle breaks and the rope snaps,
And unless the lullaby ceases,
The Linga of Guhēśvara cannot be seen. (tr.)

A famous *Vacana* of Basavaṇṇa:

What one speaks must be like a necklace of pearls,
What one speaks must be like the brilliance of the diamond,
What one speaks must be like the rays shooting from a crystal,
What one speaks must be such as to make the Lord
Say 'aye, aye'! with approval.
If one does not act as one speaks,
How can one earn the grace of Lord Kūḍalasaṅgama?
(tr.)

The great woman-mystic Mahādevī-akka, cast off earthly glory in her longing for God. The following powerful *Vacana* was born at the decisive moment when, shedding all her queenly robes and jewels, she left the palace of her royal husband, in utter nakedness, symbolic of the nakedness of the soul:

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The gold in one's hands may be claimed as the forfeit;
Can the wealth of one's beauty be exacted as a fine?
One's dresses and decorations may be taken from one;
Can the nakedness that covers one be torn from one?
What need, O fool, are garments and adornments
To her who, clad in the light of Lord Mallikārjuna,
Has cast off from her all vestige of shame? (tr.)

Siddharāma, the *karma-yōgi*, transformed by Allama into a *Jñāna-yōgi* speaks of the inadequacy of language to describe the state of self-realization:

When the Spirit (*Liṅga*) has assumed the form of the body (*Aṅga*), and the body of the Spirit,
The spirit merged with the body is verily like the body, and the body merged with the Spirit is like the spirit itself.
When the mind itself becomes the Spirit and the spirit the mind,
Again is the merged Spirit like the merged spirit itself,
For such is the dichotomy between word and word.
O Kapilasiddha Mallinātha, could the medley of words and sounds,
Still find access to the self?
Teach me this, my Linga, is it still open to me
To seek Thee as my God? (tr.)

Āydakki Mārayya gleaned grains of rice from shopfronts or fields to serve Śiva's devotees. The famous motto 'Kāyakavē Kailāsa' occurs in one of his compositions and was his gift to the Faith.

The Vacanakāras had opened up new poetic horizons, giving a new insight to subsequent poets into the vast potentialities of Kannada language and the abundant possibilities of poetic subjects and poetic forms.

Harihara (c. 1200). Harihara, a devotional poet of the early 13th century, received inspiration from *vacanas* and *vacanakāras*. He has come to be known as the poet of the *Ragaḷe*, as he composed nearly a hundred poetical pieces in the native metre called the *Ragaḷe*. It permits initial as well as end-rhyme. Extracts cited later will reveal something of its character.

Originally only a metre, the *Ragaḷe* became in Harihara's hands a new poetic form.

The subjects of these *Ragaḷes* are the lives of the ancient Śaivite saints of Tamilnadu like Tiru Nīlakaṇṭhar, Nambiyaṇṇa, Kaṇṇappa and Rudra Paśupati, and those of the mystics of Karnataka like Basavaṇṇa, Allama Prabhu and Mahadēvi-Akka, who belonged to the recent past. Devotion and emotional fervour, the principal characteristics of his poetry, stand out in his *Ragaḷes*. (A *Ragaḷe* is a composition akin to blank verse, with rhymes in the beginning and end of each line.)

These *Ragaḷes* have a uniform framework—a beginning, a middle and an end. The introductory part relates where the saint lived and what his particular *kāyaka* (consecrated labour) was. The second gives an account of the ordeals to which the saint's devotion was subjected by Lord Siva, or of the special way in which the saint's devotion revealed itself. In the final stage Lord Siva proudly recounts to His *gaṇas* (angel hordes) how, through his firm devotion, his devotee had defeated Him.

In a long *Ragaḷe*, the poet relieves monotony by using verse in one *sthaḷa* (section) and prose in another.

Impatient of any obstacle between the devotee and the Lord, be it a moment's interval or the very means of his worship, Harihara's yearning surges forth in the following passage describing the worship of Siva:

The moment of culling the flowers seemed aeons and aeons
An eternity of devout worship seemed but a moment
He took fright when the *arghya* stream
Became a screen hiding the Liṅga;
He pushed aside the flower which proved
A barrier between him and the deity. (tr.)

Harihara's fondness for *Ragaḷes* is said to have earned for him the deprecatory title of 'the *Ragaḷe* poet' (the fun poet) and provoked him into writing his *Girijā-Kalyāṇa*, a learned work in the classical *campu* style. *Kāḷidāsa's Kumārasambhava* was perhaps its source. Yet, in plot as well as in execution, Harihara has followed his own bent. Himself a resident of Hampe, he has boldly shifted the theatre of Girija's wedding from the Himalayas to Pampā-kṣetra (Hampe). His work ends with Girija's wedding, and not with the birth of Kumāra, as in Kalidasa. In description as in characterization, Harihara seems to have not much in common with Kalidasa. Rudra's opening his third eye, quite an ordinary event to Kalidasa, needing but half a stanza, is to Harihara a world-shaking event:

The eye in the forehead of the Lord of Hampe fumed and fretted, lit up and shot out sparks. It threw up a golden light into the heavens, which spread apace over all the quarters. Blaze, blaze, blaze, it moved on, enfolded the wielder of the floral arrow, touched him, licked him, and without chewing, gobbled him up, emitting a loud belch. (tr.)

Proceeding from the fiery eye, the flames gathered en masse, and, shooting out great sparks, rumbled and roared, became vexed, assumed all the rage and fury of the thunder-bolt family and burned up in half a wink the consort of Rati. (tr.)

Harihara's mastery over nature-description is seen in the unparalleled picture of winter:

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The cold was born, the cold grew,
Gave cold to all and took cold from all;
'Whew, what a cold! How cold!' it muttered,
Wrapped itself with a robe of cold,
Put on a jacket of cold and footwear of cold,
And, with fresh cold, it laid its cold finger on all. (tr.)

Finally, here is a metaphor par excellence:

The body itself became a jacket of cold to the vital breath. (tr.)

Rāghavāṅka (c. 1230). The literary revolution started by Harihara not only in language and metre but in subject-matter was accelerated by his nephew Rāghavāṅka, who lived about A. D. 1230. His works in the indigenous metre called *Ṣaṭpadi*, are believed to be six. But his two principal works are enough to indicate his poetic motives, his style and the merit of his poetry.

The first of these is *Hariścandra Caritra*. The Hariścandra episode, which has been related in the *Aitarēya Brāhmaṇa*, the *Sānkhyāgana*, *Śrauta Sūtra*, *Vēdārtha Dīpikā*, the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas*, and the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, first took literary shape in the drama *Caṇḍa Kauśika* by Kṣēmendra of the 10th century. But neither in plot development nor artistry, nor dramatic quality can the drama approach Rāghavāṅka's poem.

Rāghavāṅka's motive in writing poetry was that 'the people might live worthily'. In other words, he wanted his poetry to provide inspiration for a virtuous life. In this simple but splendid poem he upheld loyalty to truth through its admirable motto: 'Hara (Siva) is Truth, and Truth Hara'. For Truth's sake, Hariścandra sacrifices his earthly happiness and glory, and even the cherished traditions and practices of his illustrious line, undergoing unbearable torment and travail. It has been justly observed that '*Hariścandra Caritra* seems to be the very first literary piece to adopt as its motive a universal value, not confined to any sectarian dogma or creed' (see G. H. Nayak, *Kannada Adhyayana Samstheya Kannaḍa Sāhitya Caritre*, Mysore, 1977, p. 1499).

Rāghavāṅka's remarkable originality in description can be seen in the following stanza wherein, employing mellifluous sounds and unstressed syllables, he presents the picture of Vasiṣṭha as the very embodiment of pure goodness, perfect peace and austere penance. The sense of tranquillity and harmony so artistically created baffles translation. Yet something of it can perhaps be captured:

Fanned by the gentle breeze blowing from the jasmine bower beneath the cool shade of the shimmering mango saplings that girdled the clear pond, the doyen of the ascetics (*Munis*), who sat in his high seat on the sacred sands under the canopy of the Asoka tree, its tender shoots hanging down in festoons, looked like Paśupati Himself speaking in gracious accents to the ascetic fraternity that sat behind him and on his right and left flanks, paying him homage. (tr.)

Rāghavāṅka's unique skill in achieving the dramatic within the framework of the *Ṣaṭpadi* is seen in the dialogue between the high-souled Vasiṣṭha and his jealous rival Viśvāmitra, the former repudiating with his characteristic dignity the unjust jeers and insinuations against his dear disciple, Hariścandra. Packed into a single *Ṣaṭpadi* is a world of argument and counter-argument. The verse given below in dialogue shows its dramatic nature:

Viśvāmitra: Just because this Dēvēndra is not tired of listening, is it proper for you to brag thus, unshrinkingly (of your disciple)?
Vasiṣṭha: Am I the sort to brag? Tell me, Frowning Face, is he not really great?
Viśvāmitra: He has heaps of gold, he must be great indeed!
Vasiṣṭha: Why this talk of gold in such an assembly?
Viśvāmitra: In a land ruled by his like, I have yet to hear of even a grain of truth. (tr.)

Rāghavāṅka's second well-known poem *Siddharāma Caritre* has for its hero Siddharāma of the 12th century, a Karmayōgi, *vacanakāra* and Saivite mystic. This saintly man builds a temple, and digs a tank in its sacred precincts, for even dumb creatures like birds and animals to drink of the holy water and gain deliverance. Allama, the Jñāni, derides Siddharāma's preoccupation with karma, in order to initiate him into the higher path of Jñāna.

Rudrabhaṭṭa (c. 1185). In his campu epic *Jagannātha-Vijaya*, Rudrabhaṭṭa relates the story of Sri Krishna. The fifth canto of the Sanskrit *Viṣṇupurāṇa* is his source. The poet has transformed the colourless original into a real work of art. His imagination has found fervent expression in his description of Krishna's boyhood sports. Here is his picture of the gōpis rocking the divine infant in the cradle:

Him whose belly is the cradle
Wherein He bears the three worlds,
Who weighs and awards to all embodied ones
The fruit of their own deeds, good or evil,
Himself remaining but a witness,
It was Him they laid in the cradle,
Those maidens frail as the creepers,
Crooning their sweet lullaby—
Jo-Imperishable one, jo-jo Great Soul,
Jo Blemishless Knowledge, Jo-jo All High,
Jo-jo jo-jo jo-jo Hari, jo-jo-jo. (tr.)

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In Rudrabhaṭṭa's work bhakti predominates over poetry. Yet, as the pioneer among vedic writers, he has his assured place in Kannada literature. While his immediate predecessors like Nāgavarma and Durgasimha seem to have felt shy of a religious theme, he made his bold choice with creditable success.

Nēmicandra (c. 1190). Nēmicandra is known for his two works, *Līlāvatī-Prabandha* dealing with a secular theme, and *Nēminātha-Purāṇa*, dealing with a religious theme. The first is remarkable for its lifelike descriptions. For instance, the female parrot's restlessness when her dear mate does not return is movingly described in the simplest *dēśi* (colloquial) words:

She flies round and round her nest, sighing and listening,
She looks, and looks, in the path of his return,
She goes in and out, and rolls amidst the tender leafage;
The warm sighs escaping from her open beak
Shrivel up the fresh mango shoots.
Thus does the she-parrot grieve
That her soul-mate has not returned. (tr.)

The more artistic *Nēminātha-Purāṇa* is characterized chiefly by the poet's natural word-play, and native, homely expression. Vāgura, wife of the hunter Vindhya, once saves two Jain ascetics from being inadvertently killed by her husband. By the influence of these *Munis* he is completely transformed, and has not the heart to kill any creature. The spiritual influence of the Jain munis had thus turned *himsa* into *ahimsa*.

Janna (c. 1209). *Yaśōdhara Carite* is a lovely poem, a class by itself in Kannada literature, composed by Janna (c.1209) after weighing with care the claims of the metaphysical and the secular, and blending the two in harmonious proportions. Like the great Pampa before him, he was as well versed in the art of war as in the art of poetry. Religion might seem to be the mainspring of the poem. But it has for its auxiliary the sub-motive of morbid passion—a theme which only a very able poet can venture to handle. And Janna has achieved the feat, turning out a well-proportioned, well-rounded piece, which, with only 311 stanzas in the *Kanda* metre, gives one the illusion of being an epic and has brought for its creator an enduring place in Kannada literature.

Indebted as he was to Vādirāja's *Yaśōdhara Carite* in Sanskrit, Janna has throughout revealed his genius and improved upon his source. Here is an instance:

Vādirāja: Therefore should such reverses be borne,
What avails it to get disturbed?
For the wise ones have enjoined
Severe penance and forbearance
To gain the final victory.

Janna: Who in the world can resist the Law?
Prudence lies in enduring
Whatever strikes the terror.
Is penance 'a being' with two horns?
It's naught else but the victory
Fostered by forbearance. (tr.)

The image of a being with two horns is a brilliant achieve-ment. There are such flashes of genius throughout Janna's poem. Although his aim is to proclaim the supremacy of Jainism, especially of *ahimsa*, he has preserved the quintes-sence of poetry all through. He has used the ugliest and low-est passion, lust, to reveal the glory of renunciation. He has used poetry as the effective vehicle to achieve this end.

Janna has a distinctive style marked by the happy blend-ing of Sanskrit and Kannada, and the spontaneous inventio of simile, metaphor and imagery. The bold simile that the poet uses to describe Yaśōdhara leaving his Court Hall to go to his bedchamber is 'Like the swan that leaves the bosom of the heavenly river and mounts up its sandy bank'. (tr.)

The greatness of Sudattācārya as a guru is described thus: 'He who took his celebrated name on his lips never more knew the taste of a mother's milk.' In other words, the mere utterance of the guru's name was enough to bring salvation and end rebirths.

The theme of *Anantanātha-purāṇa* is the story of Ananta-nātha, the 14th Tīrthaṅkara. It is a learned work of 14 cantos. Barring the *caṇḍaśāsana* episode, which, however, is not directly related to the poet's main theme, this poem is by no means conspicuous for its poetic quality. In writing it Janna seems to have been prompted by the sole motive of following the lead of several of his predecessors and composing an epic wholly devoted to his own religion.

The *caṇḍaśāsana* episode, which occurs briefly in the Sanskrit *Uttara Purāṇa*, is transformed here into a beautiful poetic fragment.

'Caṇḍaśāsana's sahagamana' is Janna's own invention. It is perhaps the only instance in any literature of a man whose fierce passion, being frustrated, drives him into *sahagamana* (suttee) with the very object of that passion.

Āṇḍayya (c. 1230). Āṇḍayya, who lived about the middle of the 13th century, is notable for his passionate, almost fanatical, zeal to prove that excellent poetry could be written in pure Kannada, without any admixture of Sanskrit, which had exercised an irresistible fascination on all Kannada poets. He wrote his *Kabbigara Kāva* (the protector of poets) in the very language of everyday use, with its characteristic flavour, its peculiar rhythm and its native twists and turns. He scrupulously used *desi* words, and sparingly adopted *tadbhava* forms of Sanskrit words only where they were indispensable. No Kannada poet before Āṇḍayya could use the occupational idioms of the people as he did.

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Bhīmakavi (c. 1369). Somewhere about A.D. 1300, Pālkurike Sōmanātha wrote a poem in Telugu on Basavaṇṇa. Bhīmakavi's *Basava Purāṇa*, in the *ṣaṭpaḍi* (composition in six lines) metre, based on Sōmanātha's poem, highlights Basavaṇṇa's supposed miracles. Bhīmakavi's *ṣaṭpaḍi* indicates that the metre had been acquiring those powers which made it a worthy medium for the expression of Kumāra Vyāsa's matchless genius. The recitation of the *Basava Purāṇa* even now as a religious practice not only in the monasteries of Vīraśaiva Gurus but in every Vīraśaiva home shows its popularity.

Kumāra Vyāsa (c. 1400). *Bhāratakathāmañjari*, the celebrated epic of Nāraṇappa of Gadag, is his rendering in Bhamini-satpadi and in Middle Kannada (*naḍugannaḍa*), of the first ten parvas of Vyasa's Mahabharata. It has come to be known as *Gadugina Bhārata*, or *Kumāra Vyāsa Bhārata*; for, even as the author of the Sanskrit original is known by his title of Vyāsa, the author of the Kannada work is known by his title of Kumāra Vyāsa. In re-creating the original, Kumāra Vyāsa's genius has worked wonders, making several departures. But his own inventions cannot be easily distinguished from his borrowings from oral tradition. The situations and the setting, the minuteness of detail and the subtlety of description, however, bear his own distinctive stamp. For over five centuries, the poem has been loved and prized everywhere. So great is its vogue that Kannadigas have come to believe that what is not in *Kumāra Vyāsa* cannot be in Vyāsa. No other work has, in the same degree, caught the imagination of all, transcending all barriers of caste and creed, high and low, orthodox and heterodox. *Kumāra Vyāsa Bhārata* is popular in the same sense as Tulasīdās' *Rāmacarita Mānas* in Hindi and Kambar's *Rāmāyaṇam* in Tamil.

To Kumāra Vyāsa, Krishna is Nārāyana incarnate. His ecstatic description of every appearance of Sri Krishna on the scene shows his belief that the entire stage of the Mahabharata is set for Sri Krishna's sake and on his account.

Inspiration is Kumāra Vyāsa's servant, devotion his element and metaphor his very breath. Similes and metaphors shoot up like sparks from his glowing imagination. His genius harmoniously blends *karuṇa* and *śṛṅgāra* (pity and love). Laughter in all its forms—pure fun and delicate wit, irony and sarcasm, insinuation and innuendo, jeering and jesting, and mockery, often turning into taunt—is at his command. He can turn *karuṇa* and *hāsya* (pathos and humour) into allies, extracting humour out of false pity. The *Uttara Kumāra* episode bubbles with rollicking humour, with an undercurrent of pity for the poor coward. Every emotion has its place in this marvellous poem. No wonder that Kumāra Vyāsa has been hailed as 'the Emperor of emperors among Kannada poets' and as 'the king of metaphor'.

A few specimens of his magnificent metaphors:

1. The soul of the ruler got ensnared, like a deer, in the words of the sage.
2. If our own Fate, which brews our cup of fortune, mixes poison for us, who can save us?
3. They (the Kauravas) clung to the hem of Lady Infamy's robe. (tr.)

Woven into the very narrative are metaphors like:

1. The lotus permeated by Kāḷakūṭa (deadly venom) is not the (ideal) diet for the bee.
2. Can one split a mountain with a chisel of lead?
3. Why cast a net on a dried-up lake?
4. Can an umbrella withstand a shower of burning coal? (tr.)

To try to illustrate Kumāra Vyāsa's metaphor is like spanning the ocean with one's fingers.

Kumāra Vyāsa's descriptive art, his power of delineating human emotions and his unique feat of transmuting *śṛṅgāra* into *raudra* (terror) can be seen in the following situation:

Arjuna, as the guest of Indra, Lord of the gods, rapturously admires Ūrvaśi's dance. Mistaking his reaction as infatuation for the dancer, Indra sends Ūrvaśi to Arjuna for a private rendezvous. Here is the poet's description of Ūrvaśi's descent at the royal mansion assigned to Arjuna:

Like a tiny radiant cloud
Breaking through the fretted lightning,
From her litter did Ūrvaśi
Alight at the royal gate;
Whose tinkling anklets sweetly blended
In a melody which put to shame
The cosmic music divine. (tr.)

But, recollecting that Ūrvaśi was his ancestral mother, Arjuna greeted her with the exclamation 'Mother!' and fell at her feet. Kumāra Vyāsa's vigilant genius seizes this rare opportunity to show the play of varied emotions at one single moment, by portraying vividly and vigorously, the successive emotions that surged up in the love-stricken Ūrvaśi at what seemed a strange conduct of this gallant nonpareil:

Amazed she was at his word of greeting,
And grew faint at Cupid's onslaught,
And while admiring Pārtha's conduct,
She reeled under Cupid's darts.
Smarting under the mortification
Of her repulsed modesty,
The well-formed nymph took fright,
Swayed thus at once by the tumult of her feelings. (tr.)

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Arjuna, however, firmly repelled all the advances of Ūrvaśi, who, like all scorned beauties, became Fury personified:

Her lips trembled, and her hand raised to her cheeks,
She tossed up her head, and in her streaming eyes,
She honed the red-hot blade of her rising rage.
Volcanic fury poured out of her heart, and her hot sighs dimmed
The sparkle of the pearl set in her nose-ring;
Her lotus-like face lost its serene light,
The divine damsel's mien was fascinatingly fearsome. (tr.)

No less masterly is Kumāra Vyāsa's characterization. Only an instance or two can be given. Unlike Pampa and Ranna, he does not make Duryōdhana a *mahānubhāva* (a great one). With true insight, he sees that the Kaurava brood, unnatural offspring of a venomous spite, are themselves Spite and Malice, committing all the deadly sins and justly reaping their harvest. Even the much-praised magnanimity of Duryōdhana was born of self-interest. The poet's sympathy for Karṇa is confined to his ill-starred birth and his tragic ignorance of his identity. Unlike his predecessors, he discerns that Karṇa's overpraised generosity makes him a betrayer by prompting him to give away his miraculous coat and ear-rings, thus making himself vulnerable; and that his overpraised loyalty, which prevented him from deserting his master, did not prevent him from giving a pledge to his mother and thus betraying his master once more.

D. V. Gundappa, the great savant and eminent poet-critic, is right in saying: 'This is perhaps the grandest epic poem in the language. For vastness of conception, for vividness of portraiture, for the variegated splendours of a colossal and complex drama, for the sweep of imagination that can reproduce for us the varying notes mixed in a mighty clash of human forces...this work stands supreme.'

Maggeya Māyideva (c. 1430). Among the Kannada poets who composed *Śatakas* (poems of 100 quartrains), Maggeya Māyideva is in the vanguard. In his three *Śatakas*, *Śivādhava Śataka*, *Śivāvallabha Śataka* and *Aipurīśvara Śataka*, he deals successively with *Jñāna* (knowledge), *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Vairāgya* (renunciation). His Sanskrit-ridden style makes difficult reading, though his works have gained acceptance among the people as the product of the poet's sincerity and intense emotion.

Cāmarasa (c. 1430). Among the mystics and *Vacanakāras* of the 12th century, Allama Prabhu stands out as renunciation embodied and enlightenment enmassed. Harihara was the first Kannada poet to choose his story as the theme of one of his excellent poems. According to that poem, Allama, infatuated at first with a dazzling beauty called Kāmalate, was lost in sensual pleasures. But her sudden and untimely end shocked him into awakening and renunciation. Fascinated by Allama's tremendous personality, Cāmarasa made his life the theme of his *Prabhuliṅga-lile* in the Bhāmini-Ṣaṭpadi. The language of the poem is Middle Kannada—simple, lucid and pleasing. The poet's use of the spoken idiom, his invention of lovely similes and his skill in enlivening the narrative with dramatic dialogues have earned for him a permanent place among Kannada poets.

Siddharāma, renowned as a Karma-yōgi, gathered around him thousands of disciples, and, prompted by mercy towards all life, was always engaged in humanitarian services like digging tanks and lakes, and building temples. Allama the jñāna-yōgi, could only pity Siddharāma for his delusion in clinging to the most deceptive of all attachments—the reputation of a saint.

Allama was amazed that, dreading the ties of wife and children,
Rama had scorned earthly life in the extreme,
And yet, like the foolish-minded man who severs the rope
With which his feet and hands are bound,
But fastens them firmly with fetters of gold,
This poor fool has been duped by the name of a shaven head. (tr.)

Prabhuliṅga-līle has the special distinction of being translated into Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil—Telugu possessing two of them, one by Viduvarti Sōmanātha in *dvipadis* (couplets) and the other by Viduvarti Basava in *Campu*. The Sanskrit version is also conjectured to be by Viduvarti Sōmanātha himself. The Tamil rendering is Śivaprakaśa Swamiji's work.

Torave Narahari (c. 1500). Pampa and Kumāra Vyāsa, the giant genius figures of Kannada literature, gave to Kannada the Mahabharata of Vyāsa, each in his unique way, the poems representing the very highest pinnacles of Kannada poetry. With regard to Vālmīki's Ramayana, however, Kannada has not been equally fortunate. Narahari of Torave, often styled Kumāra Vālmīki, has rendered in his well-known *Torave Rāmāyaṇa* the Sanskrit epic of Vālmīki in over five thousand *ṣaṭpadis*. Nowhere could he reach, or even approach, the sublimity of Vālmīki; yet, to his good fortune, his work has endeared itself to all Ramayana-lovers in Kannada. For neither before nor after him has any Ramayana of the Vedic tradition appeared in Kannada. The Bhakti of the Bhāgavata school is the outstanding characteristic of Torave's poem. Through the poet's inordinate hurry the poem has been bereft of any waters of deeply moving poetry.

Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi (c. 1500). Nijaguṇa Śivayōgi is a rare blend of a mystic and a poet. His knowledge of the sacred

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was as profound as his poetic talent was brilliant. He is the author of seven works—*Kaivalya Paddhati*, *Paramānubhava Bōdhe*, *Paramārtha Gite*, *Anubhavasāra*, *Aruvattūmuvara Trividhi*, *Paramārtha Prakāsike* (the work that throws light on the ultimate Truth) and *Vivēka Cintāmani*. The last is an encyclopaedia—the first one in Kannada—covering as many as 765 topics. He is renowned for many lyrics, poetic and musical. He has the distinction of transforming the metaphysical into soul-stirring poetry.

The Hymns of Haridāsas. The Haridāsas of Karnataka used music to transport them to God's presence. Music which is the most fascinating and the most soul-stirring of all the fine arts was for them the means of the attainment of the summum bonum for themselves, and the guide to lead their fellowmen to the same goal. Thus they used their God-given gift of singing to please God Himself and to serve mankind. The Haridāsas were social reformers also, attacking hypocrisy, pride of birth and superstition.

The Haridāsas are not all of the same period. The earliest of them was Narahari Tīrtha (c. A.D. 1275), who was the third in the line of Sri Mādhavācārya to ascend the pontifical seat. Then came Vyāsarāya (c. A.D. 1525), Purandaradāsa (c. A.D. 1550) who is hailed as the father of Carnatik music, and Kanakadāsa (c. A.D. 1550), the three of them being recognized as the Great Trinity of the Haridāsa school. Still later came a whole host of devotees who composed *Kīrtanas* (musical hymns) and became renowned as Haridāsas. Without attempting a critique of these *Kīrtanas* or enumerating their composers, a general indication of the nature of the *Kīrtana* is given.

The Haridāsas largely employed the spoken language of the common people, deliberately eschewing the highbrow style of the upper classes. Especially in the songs directly addressed to the people, they used a language that was not only intelligible but pleasing. Their songs took several forms like *kīrtanas*, *sulādis* (a type of musical composition) and *ugābhōgas* (another type of musical composition), the formal characteristics of which are for musicologists.

Let us take for instance the following *kīrtana* of Purandaradāsa, hailed by his own guru Vyāsarāya as 'the Dāsa among the Dāsas'. Seemingly a mere enumeration of the *avatārs* (incarnations) of Nārāyaṇa, the song brims in every *caraṇa* (stanza) with the *vātsalya-bhāva* (mood of parental affection). It is the gopis addressing Yaśōda, the foster-mother of baby Krishna.

Refrain

Come thou, Mother-gopi, thy dear baby is crying,
come thou at once.

Sub-refrain

Whoever else may rock the cradle,
He, the foe of (the demon) Mura, will not sleep.

The Caraṇas

1. Bearing Mount Meru, he cries, complaining—
O it is heavy, too heavy, (the Kūrma-avatār)
2. Holding up the earth by the tip of his fang,
He weeps, complaining—My jaws are aching,
(Varāha-avatār)
3. Looking at the entrails of the wicked Rākṣasa
(Hiraṇya Kaśipu)
The baby falls to inconsolable weeping.
(Narasimha-avatār)
4. Having measured the whole Earth with one little foot of his,
Thy baby weeps, saying—My toe is aching,
(Vāmana-avatār)
5. Wilfully does he try to wield the battle-axe,
And he is weeping (because we do not let him)—
(Paraśu Rāma-avatār)
6. Reluctant to see the huge hordes of monkeys,
Thy baby is weeping, and weeping, and weeping
(Rāma-avatār)
7. Unable to reach the butter-pot on the rope-swing,
Thy baby is weeping, O weeping and weeping,
(Krishna-avatār)
8. All naked he stands, pressing us all
To take him in our arms, (and if we don't) he falls to weeping (Buddha-avatār)
9. He will not mount his magnificent steed,
He will not let us lay him in the cradle,
But he goes on weeping, and weeping, and weeping.
(The Kalki-avatār) (tr.)

Variation of the Refrain:

Do thou come at once, O Mother-Gopi,
And give suck to thy baby, Purandara Vithala.

And now for a ugābhōga of Śrī Vyāsarāya, which paradoxically describes the supreme longing of the unattached devotee:

If my eyes keep gazing on thy supreme beauty,
And my ears keep hearing of thy endless generosity,
If my tongue is never tired
Of savouring thy sweet name,
If, oblivious of myself and all the world,
I am plunged in the ocean of thy ineffable grace,
My entire being swelling with ecstasy,
If, in such wise, I keep on saying—
Raṅga, my Raṅga, doth that not suffice?
Bless me, Sri Krishna, with success in this endeavour,
The very touch of all else I abhor and shun. (tr.)

Cāṭu Viṭṭalanātha (c. 1530). Kannada scholars conjecture that a certain Cāṭu Viṭṭalanātha wrote the Kannada

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Bhāgavata. It is still a matter of controversy whether he was its sole author or only the compiler of the renderings of different sections of the Bhāgavata by many poets. The poem consists of over twelve thousand *ṣaṭpadis*. Thanks to Cāṭu Viṭṭalanātha, Kannadigas can claim that Kannada too has its *Bhāgavata*.

Lakṣmīśa (c. 1550). Lakshmisha's (Lakṣmīśa) *Jaimini Bhārata*, based on Jaimin's Sanskrit work of the same name, is second only to Kumāra Vyāsa's *Bhārata* in its universal popularity. The theme is Yudhiṣṭhira's *Aśvamēdha* (Horse Sacrifice). Naturally the poem abounds in stirring accounts of thrilling battles, dramatically presented with wonderful variation. A great devotee of Srī Krishna, like Kumāra Vyāsa, the poet crowns every Pāṇḍava victory with ecstatic praise of Sri Krishna without the least monotony. But the most poetic and moving passages of the poem are two episodes, the Candrahāsa Episode and the Episode of the Abandonment of Sita—which stand out as independent poetic fragments.

In the second episode, the poet lays bare the mind and heart and soul of each of his principal characters, and allows us to witness the drama that goes on within them.

After passing through an agonising turmoil, Rama reaches the decision that the only course open to him is to abandon Sita. What a brilliant stroke it is that the poet makes Rama his own judge! Fate has driven him to inflict a grievous wrong on the innocent Sita, and this is how he judges himself:

> I have abandoned my Sita, even as the Brāhmaṇas (Vipras) of the Kali age shall forsake their virtuous conduct!

Here is an admirable piece of anachronism serving as a handmaid to the poet's own caustic comment on contemporary society. With the powerful sarcasm born of intolerable grief Sita urges Lakshmana to hurry back to Ayodhya lest Rama's royal displeasure should descend upon his head. Her volcanic grief hurls dart after dart at Lakshmana, though its real target is Rama:

> Here, in this forest, I have the aid of wild beasts, but Raghunatha (Rama) is all alone'.

Finally, the poet causes Sita to say words that thrust a dagger into the hearts of all men.

> All things considered, Raghava, who is mercy personified, is not at fault. Mine is the fault that I should still seek to support this body of mine, having committed the highest sin of being born a woman.

Lakshmana's apostrophe to the various objects in the forest is such as to wring all human hearts:

> O ye woody regions, o ye trees,
> O ye birds and beasts and insects,
> O ye creepers, grasses and glades,
> O ye elements and quarters,
> Do ye guard her.
> O thou goddess Dharma, and thou Jāhnavi, mother of all the world,
> Do ye protect this Jānaki, this mother of mine.
> O thou mother, Earth-goddess, here I consign thy daughter (to thy keeping).
> With this (fervent prayer) Saumitri folded his hands. (tr.)

With his excellent judgement in choosing his theme, his splendid sense of propriety in making suitable modifications and his wonderful mastery over the art of narration Lakshmisha has distilled into his poem the very essence of poetry. No wonder that, for centuries his poem has been resounding in the ears of the Kannada people.

Ratnākara Varṇi (c. 1557). Even as Kumāra Vyāsa wrote his great epic entirely in *Ṣaṭpadis*, Ratnākara Varṇi wrote his great epic *Bharateśa-Vaibhava* in the native verse form known as *sāṅgatya*. Ratnākara's hero is the Emperor Bharata, son of the first Tīrthaṅkara. The poet has the rare distinction of blending in harmonious measure the emotion of love with the spirit of renunciation. Employing simple language and discreet verbal embroidery, he has succeeded in writing a popular epic, free from all excesses.

Bharātēśa Vaibhava is as dear to Kannadigas as Kumāra vyāsa's *Bhārata*, Lakṣmīśa's *Jaimini Bhārata*, Narahari's *Torave Rāmāyaṇa*, and Ṣaḍakṣari's *Rājaśēkhara Viḷāsa*.

Sarvajña (c. 1600). Sarvajña, the Karnataka counterpart of Tiruvaḷḷuvar of Tamilnadu and *Vēmana* of Andhra, preached in spoken Kannada the most essential rules of conduct and the highest ethical values. He employed the *Tripadi* (native composition of 3 lines) metre, peculiarly adapted to folk song. His real name, antecedents, and the number of his *tripadis* are unknown. On linguistic grounds his date is estimated to be about A.D. 1600.

Sarvajña's *vacanas* are essentially poetic outpourings embodying the age-long experience and wisdom of the common people. As A. R. Krishna Sastri says, 'Sarvajña is a people's poet. He can express with perfect accuracy the most abstruse thoughts in the simplest possible words' (A. R. Krishna Sastri, *Sarvajña Kavi*, Mysore, 1942, p. [illegible]).

As for instance here is Sarvajña's advice recommending prudence in giving charity:

> If the oil in the lamp is spent, does one pour oil from pot?
> Give not, nor fail to give,
> And do not give up charity—says Sarvajña. (tr.)

The following verse couched in homely style and expressive slang, tells us that gaining heaven is no child's play:

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Without controlling the senses, without curbing the flesh,
If thou wouldst gorge and gorge, and yet go to heaven,
Do you think heaven is the harlot's realm?
—asks Sarvajña. (tr.)

Ṣaḍakṣaradēva (c. 1655). Ṣaḍakṣaradēva, also known as Ṣaḍakṣari revived the *campu* which had fallen into disuse. He has composed both Kannada and Sanskrit poems. His Kannada works are *Rājaśēkhara-Vilāsa, Śabara-Śaṅkara-Vilāsa* and *Vṛṣabēndra-Vijaya.*

The aim of *Rājaśekhara-Vilāsa* is to proclaim the supremacy and virtue of the Śiva-pañcākśari-mantra. The theme is the story of a Satyēndra Cōḷa, famed for ages in Tamilnad. The poet has filled out the slender plot with his descriptions. The episode of Tirukoḷavināchiyār is the veritable well-spring of pathos in the poem. The severed head and trunk of her child are produced before the mother, with the dreadful report that her child was crushed under the hoofs of the prince's horse. 'Who was it that had the heart to wring the neck of the baby-parrot and cast it thus away?' she wails. As if her child were still alive, she laments:

Writhing in agony with your neck trampled
Under the horse's hoof, did you forget me, your own mother?
Or did you cry out to me—Mother, O my mother!
Or, thinking me perchance the very home of guilt,
Did you thus desert me? Tell me, my boy, speak but one word. (tr.)

Śabara-Śaṅkara-Viḷāsa is a poem of five cantos, describing the sports of Lord Siva. In this work the poet has been influenced by Vyāsa's Mahabharata and Kumāra Vyāsa's *Bhārata.*

Vṛṣabhēndra Vijaya is a lengthy poem consisting of four thousand stanzas and relating the story of Basavaṇṇa.

Ṣaḍakṣari is a scholar-poet. In his poetry one feels the weight of learning far more than the beauty and grace of poetry.

Chikadēvarāja (c. 1672–1700). The rulers of Mysore have been the patrons of poetry, music, drama and other fine arts; some of them have been poets themselves. Śrī Chikadēvarāja Odeyar is one such ruler of Mysore. Of great interest is his *Gīta Gōpala,* a collection of songs of devotion, composed of seven *saptapadis* and charged with bhakti, the kind of bhakti glorified by Śrīvaiṣṇavism. Yet the philosophy is kept well in the background, the poetry and music receiving pride of place. Thus this collection has indeed enriched the treasury of *Harikīrtanas* in Kannada.

Sanciya Honnamma (c. 1680). Sanciya Honnamma, the Maharāṇi's personal maid in the court of Chikadēvarāja Odeyar, bears the distinction of being the first woman who wrote a complete poem in Kannada.

Honnamma's famous poem *Hadibadeya Dharma* paints the picture of the ideal wife, embodying devotion and fidelity to the husband. Measureless are her love and compassion for womankind. Indignant at the base conduct of people, even parents, who scorn a female baby, the poet throws her famous challenge:

Was it not woman that gave them all birth,
Was it not woman that reared them?
Why do they decry woman, calling her a 'female', 'only a female'—
These boors that cannot see? (tr.)

Through her unique poem Honnamma has carved out a niche for herself among the few women who ventured to enter the magic circle of poetry.

After Honnamma there is a long barren stretch till the beginning of the 20th century. Scholars have tried unsuccessfully to explain the reasons for this lacunae.

Conclusion: Kannada Literature, its Nature and Special Characteristics

For as long as a thousand years and more, more than a thousand writers have written literary works in Kannada. Jains, Vīraśaivas and Brāhmaṇas have produced works on their own respective religions and on various secular themes. Buddhists too might have written in Kannada, but, for unknown reasons, their works have not been found.

Works like those of Pampa and Kumāra Vyāsa may unhesitatingly be compared with the very best epics of the world. The Vīrasaiva mystics exhaustively explored the potentialities of Kannada, and, through their spiritual outpourings, contributed a new literary form in their 'vacanas', which are peculiar to Kannada literature and almost unique in world literature. Subordinating the word to pure melody, the Haridāsas added their own special hymn forms to Kannada literature: *Kīrtanas, Ugābhōgas* and *Suḷādis,* and thus enriched the spiritual and moral life of the people. Sometimes using Sanskrit with sporting ease, sometimes blending Sanskrit and Kannada in harmonious proportions, and sometimes using pure, native Kannada without any admixture whatsoever, Kannada poets have demonstrated the possibility of creating excellent works in the language.

They have borrowed freely from other languages; Sanskrit, Prakrit and Tamil. Nannaya, the Ādi-kavi of Telugu has derived inspiration from Pampa, the Ādi-kavi of Kannada, and a great many Kannada works have been translated into other languages.

This review may be fittingly concluded with the three following special contributions of Kannada to world thought:

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(i) manuṣyajāti tānonde valam
Humanity is indeed one community—Pampa

(ii) tanna tānaridaḍe tannarive guru
If one knows oneself, such self—
knowledge is one's (true) preceptor—The Vacanakāras

(iii) mātembudu jyōtirliṅga—
The word is the Light Divine—The Vacanakāras.

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Kashmiri

P. N. PUSHP

Beginning

The beginnings of Kashmiri verse appear to be a logical extension of the Apabhrmasa-Prakrit stanzas preserved in the early Sanskrit texts of Kashmir Saivism, such as the *Tantrasāra* (c.1015) by Abhinavagupta. These stanzas were meant to sum up, or pinpoint, the significance of the doctrine treated in each of the 22 *Āhnikas* of the work, and were, by and large, drawn from the esoteric bank of traditional lore peculiar to Kashmir. *Āhnika* IV, for instance, concludes with as many as six *saṅgraha-ślokas*, two each in Sanskrit, Apabhramsa and Prakrit respectively, articulating almost identical formulations without any sort of translative or paraphrased regimentation. The Sanskrit verse,

Yathā yathā niścaya īdrigāpyate
tathāvidheyam parayoginā sadā;
na vastuyāthātya-vihīnayā dṛśā
viśaṅkitavyam śiśudeśanāgamaiḥ.

finds a close parallel, no doubt, in the following Apabhramsa verse which sounds today like an archaic Kashmiri piece:

Jaha jaha jassu jehim civa
paphura-i ajjavasā-u;
taha taha tassu tahim civa
tamsu ho-i pahā-u.

As and when the urge of a seeker
goes on vibrating,
so and then his impact too
manifests itself, no doubt. (tr.)

Even in his *Parātrimśikā*, Abhinavagupta has quoted seven Apabhramsa pieces, four of which are positively metrical. These furnish telling samples of very early verse in the language that in due course developed into the Kashmiri of the *Mahānayaprakāśā* (Light of Supreme Law) of Śitikaṇṭha (c. 1250), the author of the work, declares in the preamble that he has chosen to write it in *sarvagocara-deśabhāṣayā*, 'the language of the area, within the reach of all'. Obviously his aim was to initiate his readers into the esoterics of Kashmir's *Śaiva Tantra*, as is corroborated by the concluding verse of the work:

Mastering this process with the Lord's grace
have I, Sitikantha, achieved my life's object:
Even the grandees slipping off the track of earnest
have I made mindful of the Great Doctrine. (tr.)

The language must have gradually assumed the role of

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effective interpreter between classical erudition and popular parlance, as is clear from the *Chummāsampradāya* (Chumma Cult) written around A.D. 1150. This is a unique compilation of 74 *sūtras* in the Kashmiri Apabhramsa, with a smattering of 25 *Chumma* verses in the same language, while the *sūtras* are expounded in as many as 126 Sanskrit stanzas called *kārikās*. Another work, *Mahārthamañjarī* (Sprig of the Great Reality) by Maheśvarānanda (c. 1200), is intended to be 'pā-ī-suntta-sattaī' (a work consisting of 70 *Prākṛta Sūktas*) and is deliberately written in the Prakrit that is believed to have been peculiar to the Yogini Devi propitiated in the opening verses. The glaring disparity in the morphological configuration of the two dialects used in these works, however, is quite revealing: while the *Chummāsampradāya* more or less uses the living language of the day, the *Mahārthamañjari* has recourse to the artificial Prakrit of the esoteric aristocracy.

Motivation and Impact

Historically viewed, Kashmiri verse must have started as a spontaneous medium of folk entertainment. However, since it failed to appear in black and white, the only specimens of early verse that have come down to the present day in writing are the relics of esoteric dissemination. The Kashmiri language was gradually adopted by the Saiva siddhas for propagation of their views and beliefs. During the 14th century, in fact, it was quite effectively used by Lal Ded in her verse utterances popularly known as *vāk*, which were inspired by the finest visualization of recognitive monism, the *Pratyabhijnā Darśana* of Kashmir.

During the 14th century, the valley of Kashmir passed through a period of transitional turmoil when two different traditions of religious culture came face to face. What was called 'Saiva Darsana' had already absorbed and assimilated a lot of other traditions, Buddhistic as well as Vaishnavistic, with strands of esoteric cults such as the Sahajayāna, Vajrayāna and Mantrayāna. On the other hand, the traditions of the Islamic faith professed by zestful divines and competent proselytizers in Kashmir have come, by and large, from Central Asian areas like Khurāsān, the cradle of Iranian Sufism, and, earlier still, a clearing house of Buddhistic culture. Such was the religio-cultural heritage into which Nunda Sanz (later known as Nunda Rishi or Sheikh Noor ud Din or Sahajanand) was born, and out of which flowed his verse utterances called *śruk* (*śloka*).

With the establishment of the Sultanate in Kashmir (about the middle of the 14th century) Sanskrit ceased to be the language of court and administration. Persian, which replaced it, progressively became the language of cultural intercourse too. Naturally, it placed its vast resources (linguistic as well as literary) at the disposal of the Kashmiri language, which had hitherto never been put to any official or administrative use. Moreover, the impact of the Iranian music called *Sūfiāna Kalām* (introduced into Kashmir by Sultan Zain al Abidin, about 1420) also motivated the Kashmiri language to borrow not only Sufistic ethics but also dictional graces appropriate to those ethical outlooks. Nunda Rishi's diction, for instance, presents a creative synthesis of the indigenous and the Perso-Arabic modes of expression prevalent among the saints and divines who had come to Kashmir from Central Asian citadels of Islamic culture. Persian thus played a decisive role in the subsequent evolution of the Kashmiri language and, consequently, of Kashmiri verse also. The Persian metrical patterns appeared for the first time in the love-lyrics of Haba Khotan (c. 1560). Thereafter they became a permanent feature of Kashmiri verse. Most genres of Kashmiri poetry are, in fact, taken from the Persian, as for instance, *masnavī*, *marsī*, *nāt*, *merājnāma*, *ghazal*, *hazal* and *shehar-āshoeb*. The very term *śāyirī* (signifying 'poetry') is also borrowed from Persian.

Kashmiri verse seldom felt the need of taking over literary terms from the Sanskrit texts on poetics, even when Sanskrit was the language of administration as well as of cultural intercourse. The only conscious effort in this direction was made by Bhaṭṭāvatāra, who utilized the Prakrit-Sanskrit resources for his *Bāṇāsurakathā* (c. 1446), which he describes as a 'pabanda-kāvya' (prabandha-kāvya). Other terms such as *vāk*, *śruk*, *vatsun*, *līlā*, *tsaret*, *bajan*, and *pad* are, no doubt, derived from Sanskrit, but these do not necessarily correspond to any technical terms found in Sanskrit poetics. This probably is due to the fact that Kashmiri in those days was not utilized for any purposes other than those of folklore and popular mysticism. At the people's level, however, the Sufistic terms *vajūd*, *fanā*, *adam*, *nafas*, *nūr*, etc. are found freely mixing with indigenous terms like *sahaz*, *śūny*, *man*, *prān*, *pavan*, *kray*, *kāran*, *gāh*, *kām*, *krūd*, *mūh*, *lūb*, *aham*, *soeham*, *dāranā* and many more.

Persian continued as the official language for over 600 years, being used by the governments of the Shahmiri sultans (1339–1561), the Chaks (1561–1588), Mughal Subedars (1588–1752), Afghan Hākims (1752–1819), Sikh Governors (1819–1846) and early Dogras (1846–1925). Consequently Kashmiri was cultivated only as a medium of lowbrow expression and was generally used by those who either had the natural urge to compose in their mother tongue or simply failed to make their mark in Persian verse. Hence the irrepressible tendency among most of them to highly Persianize their diction or to introduce, here and there, lines in Persian of their own, just to remind readers of their (the authors') competence at the 'higher level' of Persian too. Contact with saints speaking a mixture of Hindustani and Punjabi also left its occasional impress in a sort of literary inlay. Thus, a few lines composed by Rūpā Bhavānī (1625–1721) are in the sadhus' Hindi dialect also. Later, in the beginning of the 19th century, Mahmood Gami and his junior contemporaries relished an outing into Urdu versi-

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fication. And Parmānand (1794–1879) and other *Bhakti* poets wrote verses in what they called *Bhākhā* (a dialectal amalgam of Brajboli, Punjabi and Dogri).

Genres

1. Vāk (Sanskrit *vāk*: speech) is a metrical utterance of spiritual content, usually in four lines and sometimes in six or more. The rhyme schemes, in order of frequency, are: a b a b; a b c b; a b a b a b; a b c b d b; a b c d c d. A *vāk*, nevertheless, need not have any end-rhymes; yet it may compensate by way of medial rhymes and cross assonances. The genre was adopted (as well as adapted) by Lal Ded (c. 1350) from earlier tradition preserved in works like *Chummāsampradāya* and *Mahānayaprakāśa* (referred to earlier) which invariably used the a b a b pattern.

2. Śruk (Sanskrit *śloka*: a four-line stanza) is verse akin to *vāk* applied to the Sufistic context. It was adapted by Nunda Rishi (1378–1438) for his utterances which were deeply influenced by Lal Ded as well as some Muslim divines from the Central Asian centres of Sufism. The rhyme scheme of the *śruk*, unlike that of the *vāk*, is more regularly a b a b.

3. Paband (Sanskrit *prabandha*: a narrative/descriptive verse composition) is a cantoed composition, mainly narrative, in a variety of metres, with chunks of descriptive, depictional and even lyrical pieces incorporated here and there, as the need arise. The first instance of the genre (in Kashmiri) is the *Bāṇāsurakathā* by Bhaṭṭāvatāra, a court poet of Sultan Zain al Abidin (reign: 1420–1470). The metres used in this *pabanda* are more from the Prakritic tradition than from the Sanskritic.

4. Vatsun (Sanskrit *vacana*: utterance, pl.: *vatsan*) is a song with a refrain, rendered highly musical by internal rhymes and cross assonances besides the usual end-rhymes. Among the popular rhyme schemes employed by this genre are (indicating the stanzaic break with a comma, and the refrain in italics): a *b*, a b a *b*, a b a *b*...; *a* b, b a b *a*, b a b *a*...; a *a*, b b a *a*, b b a *a*...; a *b*, c d a *b*, e f a *b*...; etc., The *vatsun* has a wide variety of sub-types such as:

Lola Vatsun: a love-lyric voicing the pangs of love, complaining often of the beloved's callous indifference, and movingly pleading for speedy reunion. The most typical of the *lola vatsun* are those by Haba Khotan (c. 1560) and Arnimāl (c. 1750).

Līlāyi Vatsun or (simply) *Līlā* (Sanskrit *līlā*: divine sport): a devotional lyric expressing a devotee's submission to any deity of his choice, Saiva, Vaishnava, or composite, or *Sahaja* (the subtlest vision of the transcendental). Typical *Līlā* lyrics are those of Paramanand and Krishna Rāzdan (1851–1926) who have written some charming *Rāsa-Līlā* poems too.

Nāta Vatsun or (simply) *Nāt* (Arabic *nā't* praise): a lyric in praise of the Prophet, highlighting his solicitude for each and every true believer and the believer's submissive fervour. The most popular *nāt* are those by Abdul Ahad Nādim (1839–1911).

Rhovy Vatsun or (simply) *Rhov*: a song suiting the typically rhythmic to and fro movements involved in the folk-dance called *rhov*. Fine *rhovs* have been contributed by Mahmūd Gāmī (1759–1855), Shamas Faqīr (1843–1904) and some other Sufi poets. *Rhov* songs specially meant for festive occasions like Īd and Ramzān were written by Maqbool Shah Kralavari (d. 1875), among others.

Sūfiyāna Vatsun: a Sufistic lyric which covers a wide cross-section of spiritual aspiration, reflecting various modes of quest and fulfilment in terms of Sufistic disciplines and Saiva (monistic) ideals. The bulk of Sufistic verse (in the Kashmiri language) is written in this genre, particularly by Shah Gafoor (c. 1850), Svachha Kral (c. 1860) and Shamas Faqir (c. 1870).

The *vatsun* has often been wrongly described as *ghazal* which carries no refrain. Some *sūfiyāna vatsan* have been called *śāstri ghazal* by virtue of their free use of the Indian terminology of mystic experience, such as *sūham* (soham), *sahaz* (sahaja) *śini* or *śūn*, (*śūnya*), *man* (*manas*), *pavan* (*pavana*) and *prān* (prāṇa). The first recorded reference to *vatsun* happens to be in a *vāk* by Lal Ded, but its first application as a genre is noticed in Nunda Rishi's lengthy prayerful song with the refrain: 'bār khodāyā pāp nivār' (God Almighty, remove my sin), and another with the refrain 'tyuth me var ditoe divā' (Lord, grant me a boon to this effect). It was, however, only in the 16th century that the rich potential of this genre was adequately exploited by Haba Khotan and, two centuries later still, by Arnimal.

5. Masnavī, taken from the Persian tradition of the rhyming couplet form, by and large, follows the same convention of opening the narrative with the *hamud* (Arabic *hamd*: prayerful praise or thanksgiving addressed to God), *nāt* (addressed to the Prophet), *manqibat* (addressed to a patron-saint) and *mūdā* (statement of the purpose of undertaking the composition). The only item of the Persian tradition rejected is the *Qasīda* (Arabic *qasīda*: panegyric addressed to the royal patron), perhaps because of the fact that Kashmiri was never at all patronized by the court. The main varieties of the Kashmiri *masnavī* are:

Lola Masnavī: a *masnavī* of romantic love that has been rendered mainly from the Persian originals, and occasionally from Punjabi or Urdu versions, with or without variation in plot. In many cases, however, the treatment

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suitably adapted to the local scene. The most outstanding instance of this type of verse is the *Gulraez* of Maqbool Shah (d. c. 1875). A variation on an old favourite is Bulbul Nāgāmī's (1813–85) *Nal-Daman*, which is reminiscent of Faizi's Persian masterpiece.

Dalīla Masnavī: a *masnavī* based on tales (and folk legends) generally taken from such celebrated collections as *Alif Lailla*, *Kalīla va Dimna*, *Anvār e Suhailī* and *Hātim Tai*.

Razma Masnavī: a *masnavī* narrating war episodes and almost invariably rendered from Persian (or, rarely, Urdu) originals like *shahnāmas* and various *jangnāmas*, numbering about two dozen. The bulkiest of these (in about 23,500 verses) is the *shahnāma* of Wahab Parey (1846–1914), while the most compact is the *shahnāma* of Bulbul Nagami.

Vasfa Masnavī: a *masnavī* that describes natural phenomena, supernatural visitations, individual idiosyncracies, social predilections or administrative upheavals. Among the most noteworthy are *Bahārnāma* (on Spring), *Sahlābnāma* (on Flood), *Chāynāma* (on Tea) and *Bebūjnāma* (on Administrative Breakdown).

Hazla Masnavī: a *masnavī* that is a satire or caricature (intended to amuse the reader other than the target or victim). The theme may centre round an individual or a group, a profession or a class, a system or a set-up. Caricature of a profession or a class generally bears the *nāma* (title), while the caricature of a set-up is given the blanket term *Shehar-Ashoeb* (City in Ruin). The most popular *hazla masnavī* of the 'nāma' type is the *Grīsti-Nāma* (on the Rustic Peasant) by Maqbool Kralawari.

Sūfiyāna Masnavī: a *masnavī* with Sufistic implications, such as the various *Mansūr-Nāmas* (on Mansoor's superb sacrifice in the cause of asserting the right to declare: 'I am the Truth').

Sharāy Masnavī: a *masnavī* of Islamic faith and tradition, presenting glimpses of the Prophet's life and personality as well as his mission of mercy. The bulk of these are translations from Persian models, like the *Shakl o Shimāil* (personal features and traits of the Prophet), *Magāzul Nabī* (Prophet's Crusades) and *Ma'ijzāt e Rasūl* (Prophet's Miracles) by Maulvi Sidiq Ullah (1832–1900), and a few *Maerāj-Nāmas* (on the Prophet's Transcendental Ascent).

Avatāra Masnavī: a *masnavī* based on some cycle of *Avatāra* (incarnation) legends derived from the Ramayana, *Bhāgavata*, Mahabharata or *Sivapurāṇa* sources, such as the *Rāmāyan* of Prakash Ram Kurigami (c. 1846), (part of) the *Siva-Lagan* of Krishna Razdan and the *Kṛṣṇāvtār* of Mān Ji Sūri (c. 1930). In the non-Muslim context of these *masnavīs*, the *hamd* and the *nāt* are understandably transformed into *tvatā* (Sanskrit *stuti*: hymnal prayer) and *bajan* (Sanskrit *bhajana*: devotional song) addressed to various gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon, or to the Supreme God of gods. These hymns or devotional songs generally take the form of *līlāyi vatsun* and quite often go far beyond the textual scope of the narrative element.

6. Līlā (Sanskrit *līla*: Sportive exploits of Divinity incarnate) is a narrative of the legendary stories of Rama, Krishna or Siva in a recitative-cum-singing style different from that of the *masnavī* which invariably employs the rhymed couplet. The *līlā*, in fact, is an extension of the *vatsun* form, harnessing it to the narrative content and retaining the refrain as a musical device to offset the metrical monotony likely to arise from the length of a poem composed in a single metrical pattern. The third line of each stanza invariably rhymes with the refrain. The earliest instance of this form is found in the *Kṛṣṇāvatāra-Līlā* ascribed to Sahib Kaul (c. 1700), but it was Parmanand who handled the genre with immaculate skill in his three masterpieces: *Śiva-Lagan* (Shiva's Wedding), *Rādā-Svayamvar* (Radha's Choice of Her Own Man) and *Sodām-Tsaret* (Sudama's Story).

7. Pad (Sanskrit *pada*: a musical composition) is a further development of the *vatsun* tradition, with suitable modification of the rhyme scheme to make up for the loss of the formal refrain. The refrainless recitative piece thus developed conforms to a pattern somewhat like this: the even lines of the stanza are shorter than the odd ones, but all rhyme together, the only difference being an expletive expression introduced after the rhyme of each odd line. The most impressive composition in this genre is the *Ṣaṣrang* (Six Colours) by Rahmān Ḍār (d. 1897), a masterpiece of mystic verse that is rich in symbolic nuances. The *pad* recited by wandering minstrels was known as the *sahrāy pad* (roamer's pad).

8. Dāstān is a further admixture of the *vatsun* and the *līla* within the recitative framework of a legend or a tale, including those preserved in folk tradition or composed as *masnavī*, such as *Lālmāl*, *Hīmāl Nāgyrāy*, *Śāh Bahrām*, *Yūsafnāma* and *Sāmnāma*. The most touching *dāstān*, however, is the *Akanandun* (The Only Childie) by Ramzān Baṭh (1887–1918). There are half a dozen variations on the *Akanandun* theme, of which two are specially remarkable creations, one by Samad Mir (1894–1959) and another by Ahad Zargar (b. 1916).

9. Marsī (Arabic *marsia*: elegy) is an elegiac verse, particularly one that recalls the heart-rending tragedy of the Karbala martyrs, Hasan and Husain, the grandsons of Prophet Muhammad. Some *marsīs* still current, go back to the period when Mir Shams ud Dīn Irāqī (c. 1486) propagated the Shia faith throughout the Valley. The earliest datable *marsī*, however, is by Asghar Shah (c. 1586). This appears to be a development parallel to the *pad*.

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10. Gazal (Arabic *ghazl*): is a poetic style taken from the Persian tradition as a distinct form. Unlike the *vatsun*, it carries no refrain. It was first made popular by Mahmood Gami and, later, considerably developed by Rasul Mir (c. 1860).

11. Nazam (Arabic *nazm*) is the poem proper, in contradistinction to any other verse genre. Though initially taken from the traditional Urdu form, it now includes all modern experiments which, strictly speaking, are not relevant to the treatment of traditional Kashmiri verse.

Dating Kashmiri Verse

Vāk-Śruk Kāl (Kāl: period)—1200–1440: The period of religio-spiritual utterance called *vāk* and *śruk* respectively in the Saiva and Sufistic contexts.

Paband Kāl—1440–1550: the period of the cantoed composition, narrative, descriptive or deliberative, using metrical patterns of the Sanskrit-cum-Apabhramsa traditions.

Vatsun Kāl—1550–1800: The period of the lyrical *vatsun* and its varieties and variations.

Masnavī Kāl—1800–1900: The period when a legend, tale, event, situation, development, predilection, predicament or environment, was woven into narrative verse in rhymed couplets.

Gazla-Nazma Kāl—since 1900: The period when a conscious search has been made for new modes of literary expression, including the conventionally-rhymed lyric called the *gazal* and the unitary poem-proper called the *nazam*. A lot of experimentation in verse patterning and dictional appropriateness, as well as exploration of new possibilities in thematic relevance has been made during this period.

Survey of the Periods

Vāk-Śruk Period. The very beginnings of Kashmiri verse, as already pointed out, bear the imprint of mystical inquisitiveness. Yet, the pioneering efforts visible in the *Chummāsampradāya* and the *Mahānayaprakāśa* seem to have remained an isolated phenomenon for a long time till the verse pattern crystallized into the *Vāk* of Lal Ded.

These utterances of hers, popularly known as *Lalavāk*, weave the subjective and the objective into an exquisite pattern of mystic lyricism. Particularly impressive is her artless assertion welling up from the depths of experience and reflecting the awesome vision of 'the *void* merging into the *Void*', of 'Shiva and Shakti in close embrace', of 'the *Pandit* in her very *home*', of 'brimful pitchers lying untouched', of 'winnowing out the inner light', of 'water seeping into plates of unbaked clay', of 'pulling the boat upon the ocean with a raw thread', of 'lotus blooming beyond the void'. On the one hand she has seen

a wise man dying of hunger
dropping like a leaf
blighted by the wintry breath of *Pausha* (December). (tr.)

On the other hand she has observered

an idle idiot chastising his cook. (tr.)

Wide awake, she probes deeper and deeper, and shares her experience with those who surround her. Like other mystics she talks in metaphor and allegory, even in riddle, quite pointedly and effectively. She recognizes the essential oneness of godhead, whether Saiva, Vaishnava or Bauddha. Her primary concern is to get rid of what she terms as *bavaruz* (the scourge of rebirth). She prays:

Shiv vā Keshav vā Jin vā
Kamalajnāth-nāmdhāren yuh;
me abali kāsytan bavaruz,
suh vā suh vā suh vā suh.

Shiva, Keshava or Jina
or Kamalajanatha He;
Rid He me of birth-disease,
be it he or he or he. (tr.)

There is pathos in the allegorical description of the ordeals the individual soul passes through before it merges with the Absolute:

I, Lal, started forth like a cotton-flower:
The cleaner and the carder dealt me many a stroke;
The spin-woman spun out of me a gossamer yarn;
All over was I then suspended on the weaver's loom;
Relentlessly the washer dashed me on the stone;
Profusely did he rub me with the fuller's earth and soap;
The tailor plied his scissors on me bit by bit.
Then was it that I, Lal, reached the highest abode of bliss. (tr.)

Such experiential transformation has been further articulated by Lal in another *vāk* of hers:

Holy books disappearing, mystic formula remains;
mystic formula vanishing, mind alone survives;
Mind too disappears, *nothing* alone persists;
void (apparent) merges into *Void* (Transcendental). (tr.)

Conventional values of morality and religion, therefore, ceased to be relevant in the case of one who came to realize

Whatever action I performed
was as good as worship;
Whatever my tongue uttered
was a mystic formula. (tr.)

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She had the competence to pronounce:

Some feel sleepy and are yet awake;
some though quite awake are aslumber;
Some despite a wash are quite impure;
some run household, yet are actionless. (tr.)

The forte of Lal Ded thus is the creative authenticity of her *vāk*:

The *śūnya*-wilderness (the wasteland of the void) I crossed,
I lost my consciousness;
Aware of myself I became;
aspiring thus I, Lal, was lotus-wise abloom. (tr.)

Such an ardent quest for the spiritual transformation of the individual, cutting across inhibiting cult and creed, was, in fact, an essential feature of the mysticism articulated in Kashmiri verse during the 14th century. It was this very heritage, symbolized by Lal Ded, that left its impress upon Nunda Rishi, who incorporated the essence of this heritage into the new Rishi Order he fostered within the Islamic framework of absolute faith in the Prophet. His spontaneous utterances, called *śruk* (later compiled under the title *Nūr-Nāma*), embody untutored wisdom and authentic vision, which could hardly be appreciated by an irate orthodoxy grimly spearheaded by obscurantist *mullas*. Undaunted, he caricatured the zeal of the fanatic exposing thereby the tricks of their nefarious trade and revealing at the same time, the essential oneness of the spiritual and the human:

Reading and writing they just neglect themselves,
donkeywise they carry loads and loads of books;
Those that aware of the heart become,
cross over manfully indeed. (tr.)

Nunda Rishi, also called 'Sahajananda' (Inborn Ecstasy) and Sheikh Noor ud Din (Sheikh, the Light of the Faith), believed in the spiritual efficacy of prayer as a means of transforming human consciousness. For him it was neither a fetish nor a fad, but a real experience that was revealed in utterances like:

O Immaculate, show me Thy face;
I remember Thee by name alone;
O Lord, help me up the *Kailāsa*
enshrined in my consciousness, O Grace. (tr.)

The essence of Nunda's message is that it is love that makes human brotherhood meaningful by cutting across all distinctions of caste and creed. This love emboldened him to interrogate even the Lord with almost elemental candour:

Who will turn to Thee unselfishly?
whose heart is large enough?
Craving heaven and dreading hell,
O Lord, they worship Thee.... (tr.)

Nunda's emphasis on inner discipline is quite in tune with the best traditions of Kashmir Saivism (so competently reflected by Lal Ded) as well as of Islamic faith (transmitted by genuine saints). Nunda's personal realization is:

He's by my side, O, I by His side:
beside Him comforted I feel indeed.
In vain looked I for Him in distant land;
My friend has come to me from just within. (tr.)

Like Lal Ded, again, he goes beyond the form into the spirit of what is generally taken for granted as religion:

'Tis *Kalima* that I read, 'tis this I learnt;
'tis into this that I transformed myself;
Kalima has sunk deep in every pore of mine:
'tis by *Kalima* I reached the Transcendant. (tr.)

The *śruk* of Nunda Rishi is essentially the spontaneous outpouring of an unlettered genius in response to actual situations faced during his wide wanderings in the Valley. Whenever an event touched a chord within him, a *śruk* would flow from him.

While the *vāk* was transformed into the *śruk*, the *śruk* tended to improvise a refrain and evolve into a sort of *vatsun*. A few disciples and successors of Nunda Rishi (in the Rishi Order) are also credited with the authorship of a number of *śruks*, including a *vatsun*-type elegy on Nunda Rishi's death, as well as a number of dialogues in *śruks* of the question-and-answer type, including those wrongly ascribed to the patron saint himself.

There are very few sizeable instances of the later vogue of the *vāk*, till the middle of the 17th century when a little over hundred *vāks* were written by Roopa Bhavani, who wrote *ślokas* also in the *vatsun* form. The so-called *vāks* of Mirza Kak (1748–1834) too are a sort of *vatsun* in form. By that time *vāk* had become an umbrella term for any verse of Saivistic content. More recently, use of the form is found in the *vāks* ascribed to Boena Kak (1818–1913). A number of *vāks* of anonymous authorship have also been spuriously incorporated into compilations (made during the past 50 years or so) of *Lalavāk*. Roopa Bhavani appears to have esoterically transmitted to her intimate disciples 134 *vāks* and 32 *ślokas* in a way reviving the puristic *vāk-śruk* tradition. Yet the mystic quality of her utterances is second only to that of Lal Ded's, as indicated by the following renderings:

The ocean, a cup: a sweet hankering.
What, indeed, then should I look for?
Wisdom? *Śhūnya* formlessness;
Being and non-being in close embrace...

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The Source itself turned towards me roaring along;
the overflow watered my (dried up) bed.
Grace Transcendant filled my universe;
on my own I could do little, O.

My being blossomed bud by bud of every hue;
Whose consciousness, if not mine,
should have frisked about? (tr. from Roopa Bhavani)

Pabanda Period. The *Pabanda* suddenly burst forth as a highly integrated form in the *Bāṇāsurakathā* of Bhattavatara who, according to his own statement, composed the *kāvya-pabanda* (*kāvyaprabandha*) during the 26th year of the reign (1420–1470) of his patron, Sultan Zain al Abidin. The Sultan, a great admirer of Nunda Rishi, patronized a number of Kashmiri poets though the language of his court was Persian. One of these poets is believed to have contributed a biographical poem (*Zaina-carita*) and another, a verse play (*Zaina-vilāsa*), neither of which, is extant.

Bāṇāsurakathā (yet to appear in print) derives its theme from the Sanskrit *Harivamśa*. The war between Banasura and Krishna is presented within the romantic framework of Usha's love for Aniruddha. Usha was the daughter of Bana, while Aniruddha was the grandson of Krishna. Bhattavatara has, no doubt, adopted the Puranic technique of interlocution; yet, within that framework, his style betrays the tremendous influence of the Prakrita-Apabhramsa metrics. He has used as many as 26 metrical patterns, including *chandas* of both the Sanskritic and the Apabhramsa-Prakritic traditions. The Prakritic ones include: *Thaddo*, *Dukkaṭikā*, *Narakuṭaka*, *Kaḍḍoḍā* and *Phiru*; while among the Sanskrit *chandas* are: *Vasantam* or *Vasantatilakam*, *Mālinī*, *Sragdharā*, *Śārdūla* (vikrīḍitam), *Puṣpitāgrā*, *Praharṣiṇī*, *Drutavilambita* and *Mandākrāntā*.

The stanza normally is of four lines and rarely of only two lines, but occasionally it is of six lines or more. The rhyme-scheme, by and large, is: a b a b (as in most of the *vāks* and all the *śruks*). When all the lines are of equal measure, the rhyme-scheme may, accordingly, be: a a a a. In the *vatsun*-type lyric, however, the refrain may have an end rhyme different from a a a or a b a.

The diction preferred by Bhattavatara appears to be deliberately Sanskritic (even archaic). This was perhaps used to secure the work a courtly grandeur. Yet the preponderance of Sanskritic or Prakritic expression has often been creatively harnessed to the dictional appropriateness, as in:

migadish śaśi-ānan gajagāmin pinapayodhar....
barhakaesh sudha-adhar sa kāmin

no doubt reminiscent of the Sanskrit jargon of poetic embellishment, yet falling into a significant pattern relevant to the context. Contextually speaking, again, there are several samples of effective simplicity reflected by the spoken diction, one of which may be rendered as:

Hearing this, Kumbhāṇḍa said to Bāṇa:
why have you invited misfortune?
The battle is extremely tough;
run you off; no further word from you. ...
While they were conversing thus,
a downpour started sharp;
A vehement thunder roared, the banner fell;
The earth quivered, the hoary mount trembled;
The sizzling bolt entered the ground beneath. (tr.)

Disproportionate preoccupation with war, howe does not allow due scope to the romantic component of t theme which, nevertheless, is a pleasing contrast. Us pining for the sweet Aniruddha she has chanced to see c in a dream, is depicted as:

Crying like a separated swallow in space,
shedding tears of blood from lovely eyes;
Her fevered frame would not cool down even in icy wat
the damsel was pining for her beloved. (tr.)

Bāṇāsurakathā was quickly followed by another ve composition, the *Sukhadukha-carita* by Ganaka Prasha (c. 1476). This work, slightly prosaic in nature, was intend to provide a handbook on various aims and ideals of li This is apparent from the nomenclature of the four cant that are styled *padas*: 1. Vidyāpariśrama (Pursuit Knowledge); 2. Madanaśāstram (Erotics); 3. Janma-ja maraṇa (Birth, Ageing and Death); and 4. Paryanta-tī prakāśā (Light of the Ultimate Stretch). The work, und standably, opens with a panegyric to the poet's pa Hasan Shah (reign: 1472–84), the grandson of Sultan Z al Abidin.

Vatsun Period. Though the *vatsun* had already been deve ed a great deal by folk poetry, it attained a new stature w Haba Khotan inaugurated a new age in Kashmiri litera the age of the romantic lyric, using the *vatsun* fo Haba's creation was, in fact, a creative liaison betw the folk-song and the literary lyric.

Haba, a peasant girl risen to queenly glory, had sung way into literature with her folk-songs. Before she bec the sweetheart of the Chak Sultan Yusaf Shah (re 1578–80), she had been maltreated by her rustic husb who, instead of appreciating her poetic sensibility, ridic her refined preoccupation with the muse. Fortunately Kashmiri verse, her temperamental reaction to her imm ate predicament was not to slip into the old grooves of bid mysticism. Instead, she liberated the Kashmiri lyric the clutches of decadent mysticism and brought it fa face with the joys and sorrows found in the mundane re of palpable reality. She had experienced the romanc life and faced its woes and frustrations too, more so her royal lover was craftily captured at the instan

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Akbar and interned far away in Bihar where he died. All these vicissitudes of life, personal as well as inter-personal, are sensitively woven into the texture of her *lolavatsan* which overflow with the sad melody of smiling tears. No wonder most of these lyrics are the pride of the traditional anthologies of music, called *Sūfiyāna Kalām*, and are sung accordingly.

Haba Khotan was a musician in her own right and has been credited with the compilation of an anthology of musical compositions too. Here are a few snatches from her verse (scintillating with local colour, topographical, floral, as well as faunal):

Sitting in the Shālamār Garden
  I'm filling my cups;
Frisking about am I:
  Love will come to me right here.
Stringing flowers for Love am I...
Sitting in (picturesque) *Ishabar*
  I'm filling the glass-goblet;
Dressing my hair am I:
  Love will come to me right here.

I'll look for you across the hilly brooks,
  Will you not come my way, my Love?...
The riverside roses are abloom,
  Will you not show your face, my Love?
The *masval* blooms in ecstasy;
  Will you not come somehow, my Love? (tr.)

Haba's language is quite free from artificial polish and ornamentation, but it reflects the natural process of assimilating the Persian influences at work during a period when Persian had gained recognition as the hallmark of cultural refinement. The poetic excellence of Haba's verse, however, fairly compensates for what the Persian poets of Kashmir failed to provide: a first-hand emotional outpouring in the language of the heart. A junior contemporary of hers, Khwaja Habibullah Nowshehri (1554–1617), took his cue from her and harmonized the romantic with the mystic in his *vatsan*. As for instance:

Collyrium and eyes are hued alike,
  drops of sweat are all ablaze;...
Tresses relax on the cheek-bed;
  wavy ringlets scintillate;
Eyebrows and eyelashes are at war. (tr.)

Among other poets of the early 18th century, who gave the *vatsun* a delicate touch of the mystic experience, were Mirza Akmal ud Din Akmal (1642–1717) and Juma Bibi (c. 1717). Reference has already been made to Roopa Bhavani and Sahib Kaul (c. 1709). Roopa Bhavani wrote some *vatsun*-type *ślokas*, while Sahib Kaul composed (in his *Janmacarta*) an atuobiographical narrative of a spiritual pilgrimage (thinly veiled) in terms of topographical realism. Another poet of note was Nunda Ḍār (?–1774) who attempted a refrainless sequence of *śruks* on a novel theme: the import of the sound produced by a beaten drum. Hence the title of his peom, *Ḍoelki Śār* (Verses of the Drum).

Thus, both the mystic and the romantic trends of the *vatsun* went on concurrently as well as conjointly for some time. Then the lyric of romantic love moved far ahead and reached its full bloom in the *vatsun* of Arnimal.

Arnimal was the forsaken wife of Munshi Bhavani Das Kachur, a Persian poet of note who was also a nobleman at the Afghan Governor's court. A highly sensitive and gifted poet, she gave Kashmiri a number of lovelorn lyrics unique for their melody and pathos that is at once personal and interpersonal in the woman's context, as may be seen in the following rendering:

A (white) jessamine of July
  have I become a yellow rose;
When, O when will Dearie come
  and give a glimpse of him to me?
Mumble not my dainty spinning wheel,
  I'll lubricate your straw-earlobes with scent.
Hyacinth, raise your head above the mud;
  Narcissus with cup upheld is awaiting you.
Jessamine-shrub abloom am I,
  shall I bloom ever again? (tr.)

Alongside this melody of smiling tears, however, the mystical drone also continued to be heard in Kashmiri verse. This was the contribution of a number of Arnimal's contemporaries who were driven by the socio-political uncertainties of the time into the innermost citadels of the soul. Their mystical *vatsan* took advantage of certain symbols and motifs used by Lal Ded and Nunda Rishi, such as *Siva*, *soham*, *dhāranā*, *shaskal* and *Mansūr*, and so became known as *Śāstri Gazal* (the Ghazl of Hindu mysticism). Prominent among the authors of this particular form of mystical lyric were Momin Sab, Karam Buland, Svachha Kral and Shah Gafoor (all of whom flourished towards the close of the 18th century). The following rendering of a piece from Svachha Kral is typical of this verse:

If *nothing* was there, *something* was:
  Nothing verily means *something*:
By and by I knew Something:
  Himself He; I, alibi. (tr.)

Towards the close of this period, some minor poets attempted what became the dominant feature of the next period: the *masnavī* and the *Gazal*. The *masnavī* form was first used by Mir Abdullah Baihaqi (?–1798) in his *Kāśiry Aqīda* (Articles of Faith in Kashmiri) and the *Vaqāī* (Events).

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It was also used by Shah Qalandar (?–1790) in his *Idham ta Giljān* (The Romance of Idham and Giljan). The earliest attempts at the *gazal* appear to be those made by Mir Saadullah Shahabadi (?–1789) and Shah Qalandar.

Masnavī Period. The real credit for inaugurating the *Masnavī* Period (and the *Gazal*) should go to Mahmood Gami who tastefully composed Kashmiri versions of many a Persian *masnavī*, including *Shīrīn-Khusro*, *Yūsuf-Zulaikhā*, *Lailā va Majnūn*, *Shaikh Sanā* and *Hārūn Rashid*. Mahmood's monumental contribution inspired, induced or, at least, tempted a number of Kashmiris to attempt a *masnavī* or two in Kashmiri also. Of over a hundred Kashmiri *masnavīs* (composed up to date), more than 50 are *lola masnavīs* by about two dozen poets; about 20 are *jangnāmas* commemorating various war episodes from Islamic conquests; while around 25 are on themes other than love and war, being mostly descriptive, delineative or deliberative in treatment.

Most of the *lola masnavīs* and the *jangnāmas* are renderings (wholly or partially) from Persian originals. A few, such as *Hīr-Rānjhā* and *Sohnī-Mahivāl* (both by Mohiud Din Miskin), are from Punjabi while a few others, like *Chandarbadan* and *Gulabakāvalī*, are from Urdu. The only *lola masnavī* based on an actual event of an author's own time and place is the *Nūramāl* of Āshiq Trāli (1844–1910).

The three most outstanding *lola masnavīs*, taken in order of poetic merit, are *Gulraez* (c. 1850) by Maqbool Shah Kralavari, *Yūsuf-Zulaikhā* (c. 1830) by Mohmood-Gami and *Hīmāl* (c. 1840) by Valīullah Mattū (in collaboration with Zarif and Aziz who contributed the lyrics). *Gulraez* is a well-knit work of over 2300 verses, including about 125 stanzas in the *vatsun* form which are creatively utilised as lyrical links between various stages of the narrative. The main plot recounts the love of Noshlab for Ajaib Malik, while an interlinked subplot is woven round the love of Nāzmast and Māsūm Shah, friends of the heroine and the hero respectively. Maqbool's treatment of love-at-first-sight quickly followed by the pangs of separation is superbly touching. Equally superb is the concurrent depiction of nature external as well as internal, each often reflecting the other with telling effect.

Quite moving are portions of *Yūsuf-Zulaikhā* too, particularly towards the end when Zulaikha laments the irretrievable loss of her beloved, Yusuf. Yet, the narrative appeal of Mahmood's work depends mainly on the occasional *vatsun* rather than the total presentation of the story. *Hīmāl*, on the other hand, tells the love story better, but is spoilt in the end by a tendentious piece of versification that is tagged on. This tells the reader that the lovers had become converts to Islam. The poet appears to have forgotten that he has basically drawn on an indigenous legend of ancient Kashmir, already used for a Persian *masnavī*. Taking full advantage of the local topography of the framework, however, he has quite convincingly depicted the various contours of Heemal and Nagray's love at first sight despite the supernatural strands in the story.

Among other *masnavīs*, a few are noteworthy in terms of description of seasons (including floral profusion), delineation of character, depiction of physical grace and delicacy, treatment of ecstasy (of union) and agony (of separation) or variations on the themes of love, life and death. These include *Zain al Arab* by Abdul Ahad Nazim (?–1851), *Vāmiq Azrā* by Saif ud Din Tārabali (?–1874), *Nūrmāl* by Ashiq Trali (?–1910), *Zebā-Nigār* by Miskin (?–1927), *Chandarbadan* by Haqqani (?–1927), *Gulbakāvali* by Lassa Khan (?–1939) and *Rānā va Zebā* by Hairat Pāndith (?–1968). Special mention may be made of Bulbul Nagami's *Nal-Daman*, in which appropriate local colour is used for the effective treatment of the Nala and Damayanti episode that was originally narrated in the Mahabharata. Despite an avoidable preponderance of Persian conceit in most of these *masnavīs*, it is occasionally put to effective use as in the following rendering from Nazim:

> Your eyes, narcissus; hair, hyacinth;
> face, a rose; body, jessamine;
> In what (rare) garden, O Aziz,
> have these four blossomed all on just one shrub. (tr

The best *avatāra masnavī* is the *Rāmāyan* of Prakash Ram Kurigami who successfully applied the Shahnama pattern to the Rama legend as current in the folk memory of Kashmir (most probably conditioned by the Persian renderings current in Kashmir among the literate Hindus). Hence the departures from Valmiki's version. Anyway, from the literary point of view, Prakash Ram's, is the most popular of half a dozen Kashmiri Ramayanas composed in the Kashmiri language. While its narrative moves with elegant perspicuity, generally steering clear off puristic extremes, it nevertheless succumbs to the temptation of an occasional flourish of Persian phraseology. It also suffers from other weaknesses such as disproportionate length of lyrical infixes, oversentimental treatment of pathos and rather amateurish handling of battle scenes, which often appear as a pale copy of the Shahnama duels. Yet it has a number of redeeming features such as appropriate depiction of settings (environmental as well as psychological), convincing articulation of emotional responses of the characters in varying situations, revealing dialogue, and narrational emphasis in the right place.

Most of these excellences of artistic treatment are, generally, missing in the bulky *Kṛṣṇāvatār* of Man Ji Soori (c. 19..) the only *masnavī* on the Krishna legend. The Krishna theme, however, has been competently treated by Parmanand of Mattan and Krishna Razdan in a form akin to the *vatsun*. Parmanand had witnessed the multidimensional manifestation of spiritual quest at Maṭṭan during the Amarnath Pilgrimage, and had realized the need to

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proceed from the (external) cave to the personal cave within. (tr.)

and to

realize the selfless Self,
meditate on *sahaja* (inborn truth). (tr.)

The interplay of the individual soul and the cosmic soul was, for him, a *līlā* (sport of the spirit) which he presented variously in his verse, particularly in his three *līlā* poems, *Śiva-lagan*, *Rādā-Svayamvar* and *Sodām-Tsaret*. The allegorical nuances have all through remained unobtrusive yet significant within the convincing depiction of the personal and interpersonal contours of social behaviour such as the parental solicitude to see the daughter suitably married and the girl's ambition to secure the boy of her own choice.

Parmanand has achieved remarkable success in weaving the Puranic legends into contemporary realities of pervasive import artlessly harmonized with the allegorical significance. His mastery over dictional appropriateness is superb even where he sounds heavily Sanskritized, particularly in some of his refrains. Much of his verse therefore defies attempt at translation. The following renderings are, nevertheless, offered for a glimpse of the thematic treatment:

Gokul is my heart wherein thrives the pasture of your kine;
O Lord, shining in consciousness.
Mind-movements are gopis running reckless after you;
maddened by the call of Krishna's flute.
Losing sentience and feeling,
forgetting self and non-self...

Wandering all around they find Him at no point,
they hear from far away the flute alone...

None plays there with anyone else,
none but Krishna there;
Krishna alone, the cowherd lads and lasses, men,women;
none is there who is not He...

Trees and plants and stones with eyes agape
unravel secrets of the inner depth... (tr.)

Parmanand's *Rāsalīlā* (in his *Rādā-svayamvar*) symbolizes the universal dance of cosmic consciousness, integrating the secular with the spiritual. The *Śiva-Lagan*, similarly, signifies the union of Shiva and Shakti at both the immanent and the transcendental levels; while the *Sodām-Tsaret* reflects the unshakable ties between the Oversoul and the individual soul, in the ideal friendship of Krishna and Sudama.

Parmanand's disciple, Bulbul Nagami, contrived a rare masterpiece of romantic poetry in his *Mohinirūp* (The Mohinirupa Episode) which Parmanand gratefully incorporated into his *Rādā-svayamvar*. While adopting the style of his master, the disciple also strikes original notes as he presents the highly romantic adventure of Krishna (disguised as Mohini, the bangle-seller) who, while pretending to decorate Radha's slender wrists with bangles, actually probes the innocent heart of the lass he loves.

Krishna Razdan, a junior contemporary of Parmanand, also wrote on the Puranic legends of Shiva as well as of Krishna. His *śivapurāṇa* (published as *Śivapariṇaya*) is a multiform work (using *masnavī*, *vatsun* and *līlā* in response to the varying contexts), while his poems on the theme of Krishna-*līlā* (particularly *Rāsalīlā*) are all *līlā*-lyrics, treating *rāsalīlā* as an interplay of the subjective and the objective realities. For instance:

Let us gather hand in hand,
come O, let us dance *rās*.
just a night; six months,
Gopīnath is adance:
Day, a year; watch, a month,
come O, let us dance *rās*....

Dancing, *vrittis* (operations) have come to a grinding halt;
even the spool of tendencies has run threadless, empty;
In such a cosmic memory an aeon is just one moment:
Manmohan Natha (Krishna) has carried away our minds.
(tr.)

This type of *līlā-vatsun* (devotional) lyric was written in response to the specific expectations of the Shaiva-Vaishnava sensibility. Meanwhile Islamic fervour of Faith had already found appropriate expression in the *nāt* (invariably addressed to the Prophet). The *nāt*, in a way, had developed at the folk level much earlier than when Mahmood Gami first composed it in the context of his *masnavī* and later as an independent genre too. Most of the *masnavī* poets wrote the *nāt*, but few reached the excellence of Abdul Ahad Nadim, who wrote it in the folk-form of the *vanavun* (wedding song), which is remarkable for its eloquent simplicity.

Alongside the *nāt*, the period also saw a number of poems written in the forms of the *pad* or *dāstān* or *marsī*. The *marsī*, as pointed out earlier, gradually evolved a distinct configuration of its own. But during the *masnavī* period too it had preserved its individuality, as may be seen from the following renderings from the *marsīs* of Abdul Hakīm and Hisi Baṭh respectively:

May I sacrifice my life for your half-ope eyes,
eyes bereft of hope, O brother,
eyes that have remained unshut
just to witness injustice done unto us, O brother....
(tr. from Abdul Hakīm)

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How often, ah, shall I recall
woes and griefs and miseries?
Which particular tyranny shall I point out?
He who, the moment he was born,
was fondled by the Prophet
treating him to his own saliva,
is lying dead upon the ground
soaked in blood that's shed.
The Prophet's perturbed soul
turning inside the grave smells blood,
and the Lord's Lion shrieks in grief:
the knife of Shamru has betrayed me, ah, my son.
(tr. from Hisi Baṭh)

Among *masnavīs* on themes other than love and war, there are quite a few which impress because of their refreshing departures from the usual trend. The most impressive of these is Maqbool's *Grīsty-Nāma* which, despite the poet's obsession with personal vendetta, tellingly caricatures the degenerate peasantry and unwittingly reflects the socio-political malady of the age when

The peasant's pulse beats to the tune of rise in prices,
hear he of a downward trend his soul is agonised;
And God forbid if there's a rise,
his heart leaps up with joy:
'tis time he reap fortune. (tr.)

This, along with somewhat similar, though less revealing depictions of contemporary reality in portions of Wahab Pare's works (particularly *Shahnāma* and *Akbarnāma*), is an unmistakable pointer to the modernity later ushered in by Ghulam Ahmad Mahjoor (1885–1952). But the intervening period witnessed a lot of preoccupation with mystic vision rather than socio-cultural predicament. It was, in fact, a continuation of the earlier mystic *vatsun* which appeared in the so-called *gazal* of Vaza Mahmood (1834–1924), Shamas Faqir (1843–1904) and Ahmad Baṭavārī (1845–1918). Shamas Faqir's diction shows the author's rare knack of being able to blend the symbol-terms of both the indigenous and Sufistic traditions of mysticism. Some of his verses are also intriguingly fresh in articulation as in:

Particlewise He pervades all;
light and darkness are in embrace;
Playing in the moon, I drank my heart-blood.
Anklets untied, where's the tinkle gone?

Beyond the *śūnya* was my nest,
flames of love ashed it;
The jingling cradle rocked in shade;
hearing the tinkle went I in.

Mounts and hills appeared ablaze,
water that I saw was black;
The greenish turf looked all asnare.
There, my friend, was I caught up.

The River's afloat within the drop. (tr.)

These poets singing of divine love and its manifestation through the mundane, raised their voice against all sorts of divisive dogma, formalism and hypocrisy. Notwithstanding their occasional gusto for the obscure and the bizarre they advocated righteous participation in worldly activity, and pleaded for the assertion of human brotherhood.

Such, indeed, was the general tempo of the *vatsun* towards the close of the 19th century when it tended to drop the refrain and adopt a new rhyme scheme like: a a, b a, c a, d a. Mahmood Gami was, no doubt, the first to write a number of *gazals* over and above the *vatsun*, which also was erroneously labelled *gazal* in his *masnavīs*. But it was his junior contemporary Rasul Mir (?–1870) who more than any other Kashmiri poet, gave the *gazal* the right form distinct from the *vatsun*. Moreover, he domiciled the Persian conceit and evolved an impressive (though not always appropriate) diction, harmonising the Persian loan words with the indigenous counterparts. Another innovation introduced by Rasul Mir was the mode of address in the *gazal*. In Mahmood's *vatsun* and *gazal* it is invariably woman addressing man; in Rasul Mir's *vatsun* and *gazal* it is the woman as well as the man addressing each other according to the actual context. Above all, Rasul Mir liberated the *vatsun* and the *gazal* from the clutches of mystical jargon, and invigorated both with real heartbeats of uninhibited longing, as in:

Drops of sweat upon her face:
dew drops on the rose-petals,
stars strolling over the moon;
O, the graceful upheld neck, the swinging pearl.
Sighting minarettes of the breasts
the heart turns upside down;
ivies creep around Sweet Pinky,
dragons flank the full moon of autumn;
The sacred thread around the Chinese lines of loveliness
The charm of your beauty will not last long. (tr.)

Rasul Mir revels in sensuous imagery surcharged with emotion:

Are these curls or sighs
upon the mirror of the face?
Or, else, *Bismillah* on Quran
writ by Lord Himself?

The hasp clanged, the door quivered;
my heart leapt up: has Beloved come?
He held out chest, I waved the arms.
Tell me, O, where did my Charmer go? (tr.)

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It is not, therefore, surprising to find that it was Rasul Mir's *gazal* and Maqbool's *masnavī* that inspired Mahjoor to move ahead and inaugurate the modern period of Kashmiri verse.

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Malayalam

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The original source of Malayalam poetry is to be found in the extemporaneous poetic utterances that have been orally transmitted from time immemorial. And, understandably, during the course of this long journey, its forms have changed. But even the modified forms of some folk-songs help in recapturing to a great extent the original form and style.

The first recorded form of Malayalam poetry, written on palm leaves, belongs to the *Centamiḷ* tradition. Its exemplary model is *Rāmacaritam* (12th century), a work of great merit which has received the attention of all scholars in the language. It is but appropriate that this classic be taken as the starting point of any survey of traditional poetry.

Rāmacaritam and the Pāṭṭu School

Rāmacaritam belongs to the *Pāṭṭu* school of poetry. The term *pāṭṭu*, now a synonym for song, once had specific connotations as a literary term. The well-known treatise on Poetics and Grammar, *Līlātilakam* (14th century), defines the *Pāṭṭu* school as a recognized branch of the Tamil poetic tradition and states that in the *pāṭṭu* type of poems, only such letters as are found in the proto-Dravidian alphabet (as can be seen in the Tamil alphabet) may be used. Sonants, aspirated surds, aspirated sonants and sibilants should not occur in such poetry. Sanskrit words, when they do occur, should be rendered in *tadbhavas*. The rhyme in the second syllable of each foot—called *etukai* in Tamil (akin to *dvitīyākṣara prāsa* in Malayalam)—has to be strictly employed. Each foot in the stanza is divided into two halves. If the first syllable in both halves is the same, the rhyme is called *mōṅa*. This rhyme adds to the embellishment of *pāṭṭu*. As regards prosody, special metres (*vṛttaviśēṣam*), i.e. metres other than those found in the *Maṇipravāḷa* style of compositions, should be used.

Rāmacaritam strictly follows the *Pāṭṭu* school in phonology, rhyme and prosody. The very name *Rāmacaritam* indicates the theme of the poem, viz. the story of Rama. But only the subject matter detailed in the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* (canto on war) of the Ramayana has been treated. The choice of the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* suggests that the poet had decided to write a *Puṟam Kāvya*, which, according to Tamil tradition, deals with war and external matters, as opposed

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to *Akam*, which deals with love and internal or subjective matters. In the last stanza of the poem, the poet states that he is 'Cirāman whose mind is immersed in Ādi Dēva' and his purpose is 'to sing for the enlightenment of the common people'. 'Cirāman', a form of either Sreerama or Sivarama, was probably Veera Rama Varma (A.D. 1195–1208) who ruled over Travancore, according to Ulloor.

Rāmacaritam contains 164 *paṭalams* (sections), with every *paṭalam* generally having 11 songs, following the practice of the Vaishnava (Āḷvars) and Saiva (Nāyanmārs) poets. It is, thus, a work of considerable magnitude, containing 1814 verses. The prototype of certain metres employed by later poets like Ezhuthachan and Kunchan Nambiar as well as certain Sanskrit metres are to be found in the songs of *Rāmacaritam*. Though its theme is of *Yuddha Kāṇḍa*, there is, by a kind of the flashback technique, a discreet sprinkling of the elements found in the cantos *Kiṣkindha* and *Sundara*, giving it its unique appeal as a narrative. The charm of the narrative style mingles with the lyrical quality of the song, as the poet depicts such sentiments as Devotion, Valour, Pathos and Wonder. Vibīṣaṇa speaks of Sreerama to Rāvaṇa thus:

Oh! Brother, He is here in incarnation
As the offspring of the king of men,
As the very ambrosia to the gods in heaven;
As the very quintessence of Vedic wisdom sought by the sages;
As the very jewel that adds lustre to the breast
Of Sita whose locks of hair are adorned with flowers;
And as the very poison to the ferocious Demons. (tr.)

Vibīṣaṇa and Hanumān are depicted as embodiments of devotion. The hymn to Vishnu by Nārada and the hymn to the Āditya Dēva (sun-god), much longer than in the original, make this work efflorescent with devotion. In the descriptions of war, it is worth noting that the weapons and martial techniques peculiar to Kerala are mentioned very often.

The language of *Rāmacaritam* is still a matter of dispute among scholars. Some are of the opinion that it is the spoken language of the period, but others do not concur with this. They say that the poet has employed an artificial poetic diction influenced by Tamil tradition parallel to the *Maṇipravāḷam* which showed Sanskrit influence. This is a fertile field for research. The diction is highly stylized and far removed from the folk-songs of the period (cf. article on Folk Literature).

Here is an invocatory verse which, even in its rough rendering, shows the approach and style of the author:

Oh! Goddess of Learning!
May the light of wisdom kindle my mind;
May I be blessed with honeyed words
In quick succession as waves in the ocean. (tr.)

But the stream of musical words in the poem cannot done justice to in paraphrase or translation.

Since the very beginning of Malayalam poetry, the fu of the Aryan and Dravidian elements has been discern It is so in *Rāmacaritam* too. Themes from the repository Aryan culture, certain metres and figures of speech from S skrit writings, Dravidianized Sanskrit words, word comb tions according to the rules of Sanskrit, etc. form the Ar elements. Melodious metres, the practice of transcrib any Sanskrit word in proto-Dravidian script, the norm *Centamiḻ Pāṭṭu* literature, and, above all, the narra technique expressive of the Dravidian sensibility—th are the predominant Dravidian elements. In the early w these two sets of elements are found harmoniously blend the Aryan elements sometimes dominating, sometimes Dravidian. But the fusion of the two is a reality in all of th

Niraṇam Works. *Niraṇam* poetry, also known as *Kaṇṇa Pāṭṭukaḷ* is a good example of this fusion. This poetry written by three poets, who are collectively called *Niraṇam Kavikaḷ* (Poets of Niraṇam). Rama Paṇi (Rāma Paṇikkar, 14th century), who describes himself native of Niranam, a village near Tiruvalla in Ce Travancore, is the most prominent of the three. Ramayan *Bhāgavatam*, *Bhāratam*, *Śivarātṛi Māhātmyam* (An Ed of Śivarātṛi) are ascribed to him. Madhava Paṇi (Mādhava Paṇikkar, c. 15th century) wrote *Bhāṣa Bhag Gīta* and Sankara Panikkar (Śaṅkara Paṇikkar) w *Bhāratamāla*. These six contributions of the three poets collectively called the *Niraṇam Kṛtikaḷ* (*Niraṇam* We

The most important factor to be noted in this poet the change in the poetic language employed. The restric on the use of sounds (belonging to the category of son aspirated surds, aspirated sonants and sibilants) have b thrown to the winds as it were. To make this practicab the written form, *Vaṭṭeḻuttu* (round script) and Aryan s were freely used. This has helped in the incorporation Sanskrit expressions and thoughts without distortion. C *miḻ* and Dravidianized Sanskrit words were also used extent. Thus, the *Niraṇam* works evolved a new p dialect, drawing the best from the Tamil as well as San stream. In fact, the significance of the *Niraṇam* works not merely in their literary quality but also in the lang used, which marks a stage of transition in the develop of Malayalam as a literary medium.

Though the *Niraṇam* poets used several metres, one more commonly used. This metre is popularly know *Niraṇam Vṛttam* (*Niraṇam* metre). The *Taraṅgiṇi* had been employed even earlier, in the *Rāmacarita* instance. But the four couplets in this metre were together to form one single stanza by the *Niraṇam* This pattern was what came to be called the *Niraṇam* which is best suited for the narration of long stories.

While there was a parallel stream of poetry that

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with the mundane and the loose life of the upper class in the 14th century, the *Niraṇam* poets dealt seriously with themes from the epics and puranas and added new dimensions to the *Pāṭṭu* school of poetry. They showed amazing skill and discrimination in abridging stories from the epics. What they wrote was sublime, serious and vital. By any literary standards, the Ramayana of Rama Panikkar, the Bhagavat Gita of Madhava Panikkar and the *Bhāratamāla* of Sankara Panikkar are outstanding works. Madhava Panikkar's image of the Gita as 'the downpour of the elixir of divine wisdom to extinguish the fire of sorrow in Arjuna's heart' is appropriate in its literary appeal. This rendering of the Gita about 600 years ago is one of the earliest in a modern Indian language. It is a marvel of condensation. When Rama Panikkar describes the rainy season, 'the theatrical culture of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*' (an adapted presentation of Sanskrit Drama) seems to enter his work. The monsoon steps in like an actor; the rainy season dances in tune with the merry beetles, to the enjoyment of peacocks. According to poet Ulloor, Rama Panikkar can be rightly called the Spenser of Malayalam literature.

Rāmakathappāṭṭu. In the case of *Rāmakathappāṭṭu*, the author's identity is certain, but it is not known when it was composed. The author Ayyippilli Asan (Ayyippiḷḷi Āśān), was from Ouvvatuthura, near Kovalam, the famous international tourist resort in Kerala. Various scholars date his work between the 14th and 16th centuries.

Rāmakathappāṭṭu is a voluminous work containing 3169 songs (*Pāṭṭukaḷ*). The poem, written in an admixture of three languages—the Tamil dialect of Southern Travancore, *Centamiḻ* and Sanskrit—tells the story of Rama in a manner reminiscent of Valmiki and Kambar. The narrative style shows that it was written to entertain the common people. But it is not mere folk-song, for it has some enduring classical qualities. Tradition has it that these songs were sung in the Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple to the accompaniment of *candravaḷaya*, a local musical instrument. Swift and easy flow of words in a great variety of Dravidian folk metres is the most important characteristic of this work.

Maṇipṛavāḷam: The Sanskrit Stream

A second stream of poetry that developed almost side by side with the *Pāṭṭu* school was called *Maṇipṛavāḷam*. *Maṇi* means ruby and *pṛavāḷam* means coral, both precious 'stones', but of different red shades. Here *maṇi* is Malayalam, while *pṛavāḷam* is Sanskrit; like ruby and coral in a necklace, the poetic diction would attain a new lustre. *Līlātilakam* defines it as 'Bhāṣa Saṃskṛta Yōgam' (compound of Malayalam and Sanskrit). The words of both the languages should blend so well as to appear to be part of a single language. However Sanskrit words may be used with Sanskrit terminations and words of Malayalam origin may even be Sanskritized occasionally.

Early specimens of *Maṇipṛavāḷam* can be found in certain stanzas of *Āṭṭapṛakāras* (Choreography of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*). *Vaiśikatantram* (Art of the Hetaera, 13th century) is another good specimen of this language. *Vaiśikatantram* was written by an anonymous Kerala poet on the model of *Kuṭṭanīmatam* (Advice of a Procuress), a Sanskrit work by Damodara Gupta (8th century) extolling the glory of prostitution as a profession. *Vaiśikatantram* is written as a mother's advice to her daughter on the merits of prostitution as a family profession. Sings the mother:

When Maiden bosoms begin to swell
Those with dense sable locks
Ought to think of earning rich treasures!
If timely treatment is denied
Harvest rich is withheld from the field.
Oh! Daughter! remember: Magic of maiden youth is uncertain
As moonlit nights of rainy season.
Oh! Darling! With what is earned during your youth,
You have to cross the vast ocean of old age that lies ahead. (tr.)

Examples from this poem are quoted in *Līlātilakam* to elucidate the language and style of the *Maṇipṛavāḷam*. This is clear indication of its popularity. There were also several successors to this gospel of prostitution in Malayalam entitled *Ambōpadēśam* (Advice by Mothers).

Early Maṇipṛavāḷa Campūs. Tales of courtesans and *Sandēśa Kāvyas* (Message Poems) are the first notable works of the early phase of this literary school. They include *Uṇṇiyaccī Caritam*, *Uṇṇiccirutēvi Caritam* and *Uṇṇiyāṭī Caritam*. Of these, *Uṇṇiyaccī Caritam* is the first *campū* in the language and is dated to the 13th century by Iḷamkuḷam Kuñṇan Piḷḷai. In this poem, Sanskrit *ślokās* are mixed with 'prose' passages, which are not ordinary prose but prose with an inner rhythm. The poem is about the breath-taking beauty of a dancing girl of the temple, whose fame has spread so far that it has tempted a *Gandharva* youth to come down to catch a glimpse of her beauty. Apart from a reference to the author, Devan Srikuman, in the poem itself, no details are available about the writer.

Uṇṇiccirutēvi Caritam (13th century), though meant to be a *campū*, lacks verses and abounds in rhythmic 'prose', which, however, is in the approved style of Malayalam *campūs*. Uṇṇiccirutēvi is the daughter of Uṇṇiyappiḷḷa, a leading danseuse, from Toṭṭuvāyipiḷḷi of Poyilam in Chokiram village of Vaḷḷuvanāḍ. Lured by stories of her beauty, Indra (the presiding deity of the *dēvās*) sets out to meet her in her home. The poem also describes the beautiful sights *en route*. The description of Poyilam village is

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exhaustive and provides a panorama of the typical Kerala village, thus:

The tender creepers in the garden,
the fragrant dust
falling from the petals of their flowers,
the creepers that go up the arecanut tree in spiral,
the slim waisted maidens
who water the plants. (tr.)

The description of the heroine's physical features from head to foot as detailed in the work is paralleled only by the description of Sita in *Rāmacaritam*.

Uṇṇiyāṭi Caritam was written towards the end of the 14th century, that is, about a 100 years after the two works mentioned above. This poem too praises the beauty and fame of the heroine, who is an *apsaras* born on earth, as the consequence of a curse. This is the curse of Rōhiṇi, the wife of the Moon God, who was angered by the wayward nature of her husband who visited the heroine (the *apsaras*) after being struck by her beauty when he saw her bathing in a pond. She sang melodiously when she was only 12 and the moon (Chandra) was burning in the fire of love. He sent two of his emissaries to Earth. This fictitious story provides a halo to the character of Unniyati. The court poet Damodara Chakyar has written the work in the mixed language of Sanskrit and Malayalam, both in prose and poetry.

These three works on courtesans represent a remarkable age of *Maṇipṛavāḷam*. An accomplished heroine and her beauty become a legend and gods like Indra and Chandra (Moon) are in desperate search of her. By means of these myths, the poets portray the voluptuous lives of the contemporary nobility. In the so-called prose parts of the *campū*, the poets have worked in various Dravidian folk metres and have successfully experimented with the poetic language of *Maṇipṛavāḷam*.

Early Sandēśa Kāvyas

The *Sandēśa Kāvyas* of Sanskrit were much appreciated by Kerala poets. A series of 'message poems' were written in Malayalam, but every one of them was unmistakably an imitation of the *Mēgha Dūta* of Kalidasa. The first Sanskrit message poem to be written in Kerala was *Śuka Sandēśa* (Parrot Messenger) by Lekshmidasa. Its impact is noticeable in the *Maṇipṛavāḷa* message poem *Uṇṇunīlī Sandēśam* (14th century). The heroine Uṇṇunīli claims descent from Urvaśi, the divine beauty. Her lover, while sleeping with her, is bodily lifted into the sky by a *Yakṣi* who flies with him to the South. As they fly over the Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple in Trivandrum, the hero chants some *mantrās* and the *Yakṣi* is obliged to drop him. In the premises of the temple the hero meets Āditya Varman, the heir-apparent of Vēṇāḍ, who is requested to take a message to his beloved Unnunili. The poem contains graphic descriptions of the topography of the region between Trivandrum and Kadu-turutti near Vaikom. References to the famous temples in this region, the rulers of the principalities on the way, the famous prostitutes and certain important aspects of the social order—all these make the book a valuable document of the past. The poem is studded with enchanting descriptions. Given below is one on dawn:

The Cocks' crow was heard as the trumpet
heralding the arrival of Cupid;
The stars were seen with faded lustre
like flakes of maize scattered
The fading moon and the rising sun, together resembling
the cymbals of the maid of dawn
The bees rose up from the lotus flowers
like a line of smoke from the lamp. (tr.)

Throughout the poem there are a host of poetic images drawn from Nature. The light they shed pervades the whole atmosphere. Critically viewed, however, this is a work with certain serious drawbacks. There is a lack of propriety in advising a 'Yuvarāja' (prince) regarding the highways in his own country and in the near neighbourhood. Besides, the hero bursts into a lecture about the sights the prince will see on the way, forgetting his sorrow over separation and thereby weakening the sentiment of pathos. Yet, taken in themselves, each stanza is unique in its excellent finish. The story is only an excuse to string together these charming descriptions. The poem is invaluable because it contains much information on regional history and the history of the language.

Another exquisite piece by an unknown author is *Kōkasandēśam* (Message through the *cakṛavāka* bird). This poem is also important for any study of the history of this region and its language. Unfortunately it is incomplete. The description of the route from Veḷḷōṭṭukara in south Malabar to Eḍappaḷḷi near Cochin is complete, but the description of the route from Eḍappaḷḷi to Desiṅgaṅāḍ is presumed to be in the missing leaves of the manuscript.

Some stanzas from a poem called *Kākasandēśam* (Message through crow) are quoted in *Līlātilakam*. It is possible that this work which has a crow as the messenger was a parody of the 'message poems' and was meant to ridicule the habit of the poets extolling prostitutes and dancing girls as heroes. After the 14th century, some Malayalam poets have written a few message poems in Sanskrit. But then it lost its vogue till we come to the modern period.

Another notable work of the 14th century is *Anantapuravaṛṇanam* (Description of Anantapuram). Temples, beautiful and beautiful sights are the subject matter of this short poem. A long list of similar works can be given. *Līlātilakam* is already referred to as a manual of *Maṇipṛavāḷam*, one

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be remembered here as well. It helps the reader understand the *Maṇipṛavāḷam* poems since it explains the 9 types of *Maṇipṛavāḷam*, assessing the roles of the elements of both languages in each category. Malayalam has a dominating role in the best *Maṇipṛavāḷam*. It also explains the special grammar, prosody, poetics, etc. of this school of poetry. Of its 210 stanzas, 196 are in *Maṇipṛavāḷam*; 164 deal with amorous sentiments. Over 50 women are praised or referred to in this work. There are several references to heroines who are adored by lovers. In the same way the stanzas in *Padyaratnam* (Gems of Verse) speak of various heroines of this type.

It is quite natural, then, that *Maṇipṛavāḷam* meant only 'sweet poems' or amorous poems. *Candrōtsavam* (Festival of the Moon) is a much bigger work which justifies this statement. This was written by an anonymous poet in A.D. 1500, with Mēdinīcandrika (Moonlight of the Earth), a celebrated beauty, as its central figure. The heroine is Moonlight herself, born on Earth and is adored and worshipped by the poet, who clearly reveals his intentions:

> May the glory of my muse that emits the fragrance of the
> Very sweet combination of Malayalam and Sanskrit,
> Add lustre to the grace of Mēdinīcandrika
> As when adorned by a garland of assorted flowers
> Of varied colours and full of honey. (tr.)

Later Campūs. *Maṇipṛavāḷa campū* is a branch of poetry nurtured with loving care by the *Traivarṇika* poets (poets of the first three upper castes). It is quite different from the early *campūs* such as *Uṇṇiyaccī Caritam*. The diction is predominantly Sanskritic. There appear a few Malaylam words in some stanzas, but even this nominal use of Malayalam is often absent. The early *campūs* had prostitutes and dancing girls of the temples as central figures; in these later *campūs*, characters from the epics are the heroes and heroines, e.g. *Rāmāyaṇa campū*, *Naiṣadha campū* and *Bhārata campū*. There are, however, two *campūs* which emulate *Uṇṇiyāṭi Caritam* in theme and related aspects. They are *Rājaratnāvalīyam* and *Koṭiyaviraham*.

Three *campūs* with different themes are *Cellūrnādhōdayam*, *Nārāyaṇīyam* and *Teṅkailanādhōdayam*. They tell the stories of the origin of temples. Popular opinion has it that the *Rāmāyaṇa campū* was composed by Punam Namboodiri. *Bhāratha campū* is also ascribed to him by some scholars, but there is little evidence of this. It is probable that the *Rāmāyaṇa campū* was written during the latter half of the 16th century. This great work consists of 20 parts, each considered complete in itself. The poem has 2000 stanzas, nearly 100 prose pieces and 32 *daṇḍaka* passages, in all. In these, the writer presents the story of Ramayana. In some places there are stanzas bodily transplanted from other works without any change. These might be later additions by practitioners of *Pāṭhakam* (an oral narration of puranic stories with the help of Sanskrit verses and with interludes of contemporary social criticism) because there is undoubted originality in other parts of the work. There are plenty of extensive descriptions, strings of poetic images, alliteration and other poetic embellishments. Yet the poet creates a Kerala atmosphere even when presenting the story of Rama and humorously criticizes the social abuses of his times. This might perhaps have influenced Kunchan Nambiar in the social criticism in his *Tuḷḷals* discussed later. *Kāmadahanam*, based on *Kumāra Sambhava*, is also ascribed to Punam, but with slender evidence.

Naiṣadha Campū illustrates the poetic genius of its author, Maḷamaṅgalam Nambūtiri, and of the heights the *Maṇipṛavāḷam* school of poetry attained during this period. The authorship of *Koṭiyaviraham*, *Rājaratnāvalīyam* and *Bāṇayudham* is also attributed to him though not with sufficient authority. The author of *Naiṣadha Campū*, who had been insistent that he would not imitate any previous work, attained remarkable success using *daṇḍakas* of highly rhythmical quality. He also integrated into *Maṇipṛavāḷam* the beauty of *Pāṭṭu* literature to rhyme with the movements of the Dravidian metre *taraṅgiṇi*.

Kṛṣṇa Gātha. An important work which has assimilated the best elements of the *Pāṭṭu* and *Maṇipṛavāḷa* schools is Cherussery's (Ceṛuśśēri) *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* (15th century). This was written at the instance of King Udaya Varma of Kolathu Nadu in North Malabar. The author is known as Cherussery, which is the name of his *illam* (the ancestral home of the Namboodiris). Some say that the poem was composed by Punam Namboodiri (Puṅam Nambūdiri), author of the well-known *Rāmāyaṇa Campū*. But the diction of *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* is so different that it is difficult to believe that it was written by the author of *Rāmāyaṇa Campū*. They do not resemble at all in point of style, diction or structure.

Gātha is the Sanskrit word for *pāṭṭu* or song. This work, known as *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* as well as *Kṛṣṇa Pāṭṭu*, is undoubtedly a gem among *Pāṭṭu* compositions, the term *pāṭṭu* being used here in a wider sense. It is one of the best products of the trilingual culture inherited by ancient Kerala. Its easy flow, its melody and elegant construction, its charming narrative style spiced with humour germane to the native soil, and, above all, its devotional theme have made it immensely popular. The author of *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* may rightly be called the first popular poet among elites. The colloquial native dialect is put to good use in this long poem. The poet has infused the soul of *Maṇipṛavāḷam* into the framework of *Pāṭṭu* literature in Malayalam. And even while opting for the form of *Pāṭṭu* literature, he introduces in it the wit and humour of a Namboodiri. While the *Niraṇam* works abound in Sanskrit compound words suitable to the language of *Maṇipṛavāḷam*, levity of the aristocracy is not found in them. Instead, there is sobriety and sublimity.

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Soft melody and loosely knit construction are the characteristics of *Kṛṣṇa Gātha*; brisk rhythm is a feature of the *Niraṇam* works. *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* has a special fascination for mothers, since any part of it can be sung as a lullaby. It charms the young as it combines descriptions of the childish pranks of the little Krishna with the melody of the *gātha* metre. In the process, it generated a new poetic culture in every home in Kerala, where questions such as these were sung by fond mothers:

Dear Kannan, won't you climb on my back
And won't you play the elephant-ride?
Won't you climb on my shoulder
To catch the moon in the sky?
Won't you sit in my lap
To pinch my chin in fun? (tr.)

The poem contains many beautiful descriptions. In some cases the descriptions take the form of anecdotes and stories. Here is an interesting attempt to describe the charming face of a damsel. Cherusseri says that there was a competition between the Moon and the Lotus to occupy the lady's face. When the quarrel reached its height the goddess of the Face comes into the scene with a compromise:

The moon and the lotus
Vied for the prize of her face.
Goddess of her face,—
Lakshmi, wanted peace
And settled the quarrel thus:
'O! moon you take the place above this line
And you, lotus, take your place below it.'
Saying which she drew a frontier,
Which we call the eyebrow. (tr. K. M. George)

Another *gātha*, *Bhāratagātha* (15th century) is also attributed to Cherussery. But *Bhāratagātha* is comparatively inferior in quality. It is possible that a lesser poet, prompted by the popularity of *Kṛṣṇa Gātha*, composed the poem at the instance of the ruler of Kolathu Nadu. The date of its composition is clear from the internal evidence in the poem, which indicates that it was written under the royal patronage of Udaya Varma (reign: 1446–65). Only the name of the poet is a matter of conjecture.

Ezhuthachan—the Patriarch of Poets

Now we come to Tunchathu Ezhuthachan (Tuñcattu Eḷuttaccan, 16th century) the greatest name in traditional Malayalam poetry. To appreciate his contribution it is essential to refer to the historical background of his age. The first half of the century that followed the age of Vasco da Gama (1498 onwards) is a dark period in Kerala history. The dynasty that ruled Kerala, with Mahodayapuram as its capital, lost its power and innumerable principalities came into existence with no central control over them, in the absence of a king. Even the feudal lords were unable to control the rich Namboodiris who lived in defiance of the ruling authority because of their influence and wealth. Political instability coupled with social insecurity brought about a decadent cultural outlook. To make the situation worse, there was the foreign agression. The Portuguese found a congenial atmosphere for their agressive expansion in Kerala with internal strife brought about by feudalism, the caste system and the sharp differences between the economic classes creating a climate agreeable to their ambitions. Their cruelty, ranging from human slaughter to the large-scale destruction of palm trees, which are the basis of Kerala's prosperity, made the lives of the people miserable. It was against this background that the *bhakti* movement was born and was accepted as a panacea for a society yearning for liberation. Ezhuthachan was the master builder who tried to unify the people by means of his creative work which gave an impetus to the *bhakti* movement. His works in Malayalam are comparable to those of Surdas, Tulsidas, Nannaya Bhatta, Chaitanya and Nama Deva of other parts of India.

Tunchath Ezhuthachan, Tunchath being his family name, was a 'Sudra' by birth and he lived in a village near the present Tirur railway station in the Malappuram district of Kerala State. His brilliance and poetic genius made him the envy of the higher castes, according to popular legend.

There had been conscious attempts by poets to evolve a poetic language to suit the genius of Malayalam since the period of the *Rāmacaritam*. In this process, the best elements of the various schools were absorbed and fused. The synthesis reached a significant stage at the hands of Ezhuthachan, whose aim was to disseminate his message from the highest to the lowest. To achieve this end he evolved a language which is not as highbrow as that found in *Pāṭṭu* or *Maṇipravāḷam*, nor as lowbrow as that found in folk-songs. *Kṛṣṇa Gātha* achieved this integration to a considerable extent, but for a full expression of great spiritual ideas at once profound, popular and poetic Malayalam had to wait for the craft and artistry of Ezhuthachan.

Ezhuthachan showed his immense capabilities in abridging and retelling the Mahabharata. He had the artistic insight to standardize the folk metres of Malayalam for this purpose. He used a language that appealed both to ear and heart and this made his *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇam* popular that it was recited in every home. The ability to read the Ramayana at home without mistakes was considered to be the hallmark of education in those days when schools were rare.

Ezhuthachan's output was vast. *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇam* and *Srimahābhāratam* are undoubtedly his works. Other *Rāmāyaṇam*, *Bhāgavatam*, *Harināma Kīrtanam*, *Chin-*

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nam, Brahmāṇḍapurāṇam, Dēvīmāhātmyam, Irupattinālu Vṛttam, etc. are also attributed to him. Ezhuthachan's typical language, style and favourite sentiments are found in lesser or greater degree in all these works. However, they do not rank with the first two classics in quality. Some scholars therefore feel that they might have been written by either some of his disciples or his imitators. There were several poets who followed his style of *Kiḷippāṭṭu* (the convention of narrating the story as having been heard from the *kiḷi* [bird], whom he believes to be his Muse). Later this style became a special branch of poetry. Even though his works are Sanskrit epics retold in Malayalam, they are full of original poetic imagination and skill testifying to his genius. Ezhuthachan brings a touch of originality even to hackneyed imageries. Comparing beautifully shaped eyes to the shape of lotus petals is very common in Indian languages. But he brings a freshness even while making use of such imagery, as may be seen from this description of the wedding scene of Sita and Rama:

The bow broke with a sound like thunder
And kings shuddered like frightened snakes
But Maithili was happy as a peahen.
She drew towards him with slow steps
And garlanded him first with her lotus eyes
And then with the wedding flowers. (tr. K.M. George)

While the poets of his time indulged in sensuous motives which was the fashion of the age, Ezhuthachan gave himself to themes that took him and his readers to the highest reaches of the human soul.

Sensuous pleasures are transient;
Remember; Life wears away in no time;
Human life is like a drop of water
Over a red hot metal piece;
Caught in the mouth of the serpent
The frog cries for food;
Being in the grip of the serpent Time,
Man yearns for pleasures in a light vein.
(tr. from Ayodhya Kandam)

With the discreet use of epithets he offers adorations and tributes to his hero, a random example of which is:

Srirama is the beautiful; the abode of supreme bliss, one revered by Indra; one whose bosom is the abode of the Goddess of prosperity; the lotus eyed, dark-blue complexioned as the leaves of the grass; the graceful; and whose eyelids are large and blue as the petals of the lotus. (tr.)

The poet's ability to epitomize an epic in its complete form is clearly seen in his Mahabharatam. Even earlier the wonder that was Mahabharatam had been opened to the Malayalee by means of the *Niraṇam* works. The detailed and comprehensive nature of Ezhuthachan's free rendering of the Mahabharatam gives the impression that he must have made a thorough preparation for the writing of his Mahabharatam by careful study and analysis of earlier works, especially Sankara Panikker's *Bhāratamāla*. Ezhuthachan's omission of the Bhagavad Gita may be considered to be a part of deliberate abridgement in the long narration. Some people however think that Ezhuthachan being a non-Brahmin, thought it proper not to attempt translating this portion. The argument is not convincing. The non-Brahmin Madhava Panikker had already translated the Gita. Moreover, Ezhuthachan has rendered the great epic into Malayalam with unusual competence. Would he hesitate to leave, the Gita untouched for sentimental reasons? The omission of the Gita, however, does not cause any damage to the poem's literary quality and rhythm. Ezhuthachan was able to make Malayalam capable of expressing human sentiments while making his readers feel the very resonance of his poetry. To cite an example:

Oh! Suyodhana! Didn't you hear that 'the barking dog seldom bites'. (tr.)

This proverb which is quite common in Malayalam has been used to heighten the effect. The humorous remark of the poet, 'Till the ugly sees his face in the mirror he would presume himself to be handsome', has incidentally acquired the status of a proverb in Malayalam.

Ezhuthachan is truly versatile. He can handle philosophical ideas and evoke deep pathos and emotion with equal skill. As an example of his power to convey pathos, we can take an excerpt from Gandhari's lamentation (*Gāndhari Vilāpam*):

Here on earth, smeared with blood,
lies famous Arjuna's son,
a boy bright as an emerald...

O my darling son, Duryodhana
You have left behind
your crown of gold, your ornaments,
the dignity and valour as great as Indra's;
you have left them all
and poor me and your old father—
Why did you leave us thus?——
My heart breaks as I look at you;
You ought to be lying on a bed of silk
and here you lie in a pool of blood——
(tr. K. M. George)

Harināma Kīrtanam, according to tradition, is also the work of Ezhuthachan. Simple in style, approaching the

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Upanishads in its profundity, and lyrical in its mood and tone, it does appear to be the work of Ezhuthachan, though the evidence is slender. *Cintāratnam* (Jewel of Thoughts) is another poem attributed to Ezhuthachan. It explains the *Advaita* (Doctrine of Monism) in simple language. There is little evidence that this is a work by Ezhuthachan, but it certainly can be classed as a work belonging to the *Kiḷippāṭṭu* school popularized by Ezhuthachan. In his thesis on *Kiḷippāṭṭu*, K. N. Ezhuthachan (1911–82) says that the qualities of good work as expounded by Tolstoy, viz. truth, beauty and sincerity are abundantly embedded in the works of Ezhuthachan and that is the very basis of their greatness and classical quality. 'Certain works seem to proclaim rather indirectly to us: "My author is greater than me". This resounds in our ears as we go through Ezhuthachan's work', comments N. Krishna Pillai in his *Kairaḷiyuṭe Katha* (p. 184).

Poonthanam Namboodiri. Equal to Ezhuthachan in devotion, but only close to him in poetic sensibility is Poonthanam Namboodiri (Pūntāṅam Nambūdiri, 1547–1640). His work *Bhāṣa-Kaṛṇāmṛtam* is intended to evoke devotion to Lord Krishna in the reader while *Santāṅagōpālam Pāṅa* is meant to manifest Lord Krishna's condescension towards his devotees. *Jñāṅappāṅa* (Song of Supreme Wisdom), his most popular work, indeed his masterpiece, is in excellent lyrical form. Without artifice, this simple poem teaches the profound truth of the transient nature of this world and its sorrows. He also reveals that the means of salvation lies in ardent devotion to God. The reading of his poems gives the reader the experience of a dip in sacred waters. The poems elucidate that 'simplicity is the highest form of sophistication'. For instance,

> Those right in our midst vanish instantly at Thy will!
> When my heart is full with Infant Krishna and his pranks,
> Do I need other Kids, to call them mine? (tr.)

Such simple, thought-provoking couplets from *Jñāṅappāṅa* have gained for the work continued popularity.

Āṭṭakkatha

Kathakali is a performing art that is universally popular. A new branch of literature grew up with it, nurturing the visual art. This literature is called *Āṭṭakkatha* (*Āṭṭam*= dance, *katha*=story).

The theatrical arts have been popular in Kerala from ancient times. People sang and danced, as a form of ritual, to propitiate certain deities. Hence theatrical art is as old as the worship of God in Kerala. *Muṭiyēṟṟu* and *Tirayāṭṭam* are performing arts which originated from *Kāḷipūja* (worship of goddess Kali). *Dārika Vadham* is the story of goddess Kali heroically killing the monstrous demon Dārikan. While these primitive visual arts developed, the sophi- cated *kūttu* (narration of a puranic story before an audien- and *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* (joint dance) also grew side by side w- them in Kerala. The influence of *Gīta Gōvindam*, wh- originated in Bengal, spread to Kerala quite early. A n- convention sprang out of this. At the threshold of t- sanctums of the Vaishnavite temples, the songs from t- *Gīta Gōvindam* were recited to the accompaniment of a lo- percussion instrument called the *Iṭayka*. Jayadev- practice of giving narration in *ślokas* (stanzas), and d- logues in *padams* (songs) may well have provided the b- pattern for the first composers of *Āṭṭakkatha*.

Kṛṣṇagīti (c. 1653), a Sanskrit poem composed b- Manaveda Raja of Calicut tells the story of Lord Krish- from his birth to his ascent to heaven. This poem is writt- for an eight-day enactment and the presentation is call- *Kṛṣṇanāṭṭam*. *Rāmanāṭṭam*, based on the Ramayana, w- evolved as a consequence of the joint influence of all th- elements. This was the earliest model for *Āṭṭakkatha*. It w- composed by one ruler of Kottarakkara (17th century), w- was also a poet. He reduced the story of Ramayana to m- it fit for enactment over a period of eight days. The text- this work is not very laudable, but it has the distinction- inaugurating a new form of poetry that is associated w- visual art.

Kottayam Thampuran, believed to belong to the la- part of the 17th century, modified and reformed this patte- making it more appealing. *Baka Vadham*, *Kalyāṇa Saug- dhikam*, *Kirmīravadham* and *Kālakēyavadham* are t- famous works. Their potential is such that they can be su- and acted with equal felicity. The 18th century saw this a- flourishing. While the courts and temples resounded to t- *kēḷikoṭṭu* (heralding trumpets) of Kathakali, *Āṭṭakka*- also increased in number. Sometimes, rulers who w- patrons of the art were also the poets. Two such poets w- the Maharajas of Travancore: Karthika Thirunal Maha- wrote *Kalyāṇa Saugandhikam*, *Rājasūyam*, *Subhadrā*- *ṇam*, etc. while Aswathi Thirunal Maharaja wrote *Rug- Swayamvaram*, *Ambarīṣacaritam* and *Pūtanā Mōkṣam*.

The most beautiful and fascinating work in this branch- literature is *Naḷacaritam* written by Unnayi Warier (Ut- Vārier, 18th century). There is evidence to show t- *Naḷacaritam* was one of the *Āṭṭakkatha* plays staged in- Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple in 1745. Therefore we- infer that this play was written before 1745. Apart from- there is no evidence to date the author. Nala's story- famous episode in the Mahabharata. *Naiṣadha Ca-* was written in Malayalam on the same subject. The- nating love story of Nala and Damayanti is the subject- several poems. But the *Naḷacaritam* of Unnayi Warie- work of unsurpassed merit. It is a poetic drama in- Warier has divided the story into four parts, each- day's performance. And each part is a self-sufficient- Unnayi Warier did not imitate anyone. The sp-

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ability which distinguishes him from other writers of *Āṭṭakkatha* can be felt in the very first stanza itself. Though the abiding sentiment is *sṛṅgāra* (erotics), other sentiments such as *vīra* (valour) and *karuṇa* (pathos) have also been employed to enrich it. Warier must have been a scholar of music to make his *padās* so exquisitely musical. Taken by themselves, some of the *padās* are intensely lyrical. The *padam* in which Nala weeps over the sorrows of Damayanti, who has been forsaken in the forest, is an example:

Oh, my moon faced maiden!
What are you doing in the solitude of the vast forest
Waking up in sheer pain?
Does a wolf roam there?
Or have you managed to reach a kinsman's house?
(tr. Third Day's Play)

After Unnayi Warier, over 100 *Āṭṭakkathas* were produced, but none of them comes anywhere near *Naḷacaritam*, because they slipped into mere formalism.

Ramapurathu Warier. Ramapurathu Warier (Rāmapurattu Vārier), who lived in the first half of the 18th century, wrote the famous *Kucēlavṛttam* (Story of Kuchela) which won for him a permanent place in Malayalam literature. The poet was also in indigent circumstances, like Kuchela, the hero of his poem. Tradition has it that the poet was granted an interview by Marthanda Varma Maharaja of Travancore, when the latter visited Vaikom Temple. He submitted a few stanzas he had composed to the Maharaja. Much pleased, the Maharaja invited the poet to accompany him on his boat journey to Trivandrum. *Kucēlavṛttam* was composed to be recited on this boat journey and hence was written in a special metre called, *Vancippāṭṭu*. The subjective element brightened the poem's simple narrative style. Warier also translated *Gīta Gōvindam* into Malayalam.

This period witnessed a rich harvest of songs in Malayalam literature. *Kaikoṭṭikkaḷippāṭṭu* (a musical dance by women), *Tiruvātirappāṭṭu* (seasonal dance with songs), *Pāna* (a folk type poem) and *kiḷippāṭṭu* were some of the rich varieties of *Pāṭṭu* literature that adorned this age. Most of them tell puranic tales. Maccāṭṭ Iḷayatu deserves special mention in this connection. *Śākuntalam*, *Pārvatī Swayamvaram*, *Sītā Swayamvaram*, *Gōpikā Gīta* are a few of his works which fascinated the upper class women. The songs of Machatt Iḷayatu were sung in the courts and halls of the elite, accompanied by *Kaikoṭṭikkaḷi* and *Tiruvātirakkaḷi*.

Tuḷḷalpāṭṭu and Kunchan Nambiyar

When poetry and dance developed hand in hand, a popular art form called *Tuḷḷalpāṭṭu* emerged. The great exponent of this form was Kunchan Nambiyar (Kuñcan Nampiyār, 18th century). *Paṭayaṇipāṭṭu* (song for a kind of battle dance) which prevailed in Ambalapuzha and its neighbourhood, is considered a primitive form of *Tuḷḷal*. There are three types of *Tuḷḷal*: the *Paṟayan*, the *Śītaṅkan* and the *Ōṭṭan*. 'Paṟayan' is the name of a low-caste community and, since each caste had its own special form of entertainment, it is probable that *Paṟayan Tuḷḷal* had its origin in the folk performances of the 'Paṟaya' community. *Śītaṅkan* is similarly connected with the 'Pulaya' community, while scholars consider *Ōṭṭan* to be associated with the 'Vēlan' and 'Kaṇiyān' castes. It may also be observed that *Paṟayan* is in low tempo, *Śītaṅkan* in a little quicker tempo and *Ōṭṭan Tuḷḷal* in a very fast tempo and rhythm. The rhythms and tunes used in the *Paṟayan* and *Śītaṅkan* forms of *Paṭayaṇi Tuḷḷal* were transformed into more appealing and dignified songs by Kunchan Nambiyar, who gave a new dimension to this art form. As a matter of fact, it is the judicious integration of the folk elements with the puranic stories that gave his *Tuḷḷal* compositions the stature of a classic with mass appeal. In the whole range of Malayalam literature there is none so vivacious, witty or flamboyant as Kunchan Nambiyar. He was well versed in Sanskrit and Malayalam, but he always gave greater regard to Malayalam. He declared:

To suit the soldiers who gather to witness *Paṭayaṇi*
It is only proper to use the graceful language of Kerala,
If the bombastic Sanskrit steps on to the stage
The common man won't follow it and, he would look for an exit. (tr.)

Nambiyar did all he could to unmask snobbery by his critical observations that are sometimes pungent, sometimes pleasant. Yet he makes his purpose clear in these words:

I don't mean to belittle any one;
Nor do I desire to flatter. (tr.)

The thorns in his words were covered with the honey of humour. He was convinced that 'no enjoyment is possible without laughter'. Nambiyar was not adept at rendering sublime love or profound sorrow, but he could make anyone burst into laughter—and then set him thinking. He did not hesitate to expose the 'devouring minister for the killing king' in order to criticize the ruling class. While dealing with the puranic stories he portrayed a realistic picture of his age and the milieu. In one of his poems, Indra tells Nala:

Kalpa Vṛkṣa is my prosperity. It is not derived from taxation
Penalties, exploitation of people's wealth, raid of the markets, confiscation of goods, bribes and the like. (tr.)

This is nothing but a sharp though indirect criticism of the feudalism of his times. A domestic quarrel is exposed by

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citing the example of the hungry Nair returning home. Food is not ready and that is enough for him to erupt. He throws off his weapons, pours over his children's heads the boiling water meant for his rice gruel, beats his wife, shatters some household utensils, burns others and throws the rest into the well. Then,

> And lo! Not being content with these atrocities,
> The Nair runs round and round the house. (tr.)

Kunchan Nambiyar knew well the sensibilities of his audience. He was aware of the fact that his poems reached their goal only when they pleased their audiences. He was the poet, the singer, and the actor who performed his own works. *Śrīkṛṣṇa Caritam Maṇipravāḷam*, *Pañcatantram*, *Naḷacaritam Kiḷippāṭṭu*, *Śīlāvatī Nāluvṛttam*, *Pārvatī Swayamvaram Pāna*, etc. have also been ascribed to Nambiyar. But leaving aside these works whose authorship is not certain, he can still be ranked as one of the three major poets of middle Malayalam, on the strength of nearly 40 *Tuḷḷal* works of undisputed authorship. Some critics say that most of these works, except *Tuḷḷalpāṭṭukaḷ*, were written by another famous poet, called 'Rāmapāṇivādan'. A few hold that 'Rāmapāṇivādan' and Kunchan Nambiyar were one and the same person, but this issue still remains controversial.

Girijākalyāṇam Gītaprabandham is a work of wordy grandeur and fanciful ideas. Some critics feel that this book is by Unnayi Warier, but this again is not supported by any authentic evidence. The author of *Naḷacaritam* was fully conscious of the beauty of his poem in its totality. Every part in *Girijākalyāṇam* gives the impression that it is the work of a ponderous scholarly poet. Yet there is no similarity when it is compared with *Naḷacaritam*, either in spirit, form or imagery.

Swati Tirunal and His Court Poets. Malayalam poetic art was in decline during the decades following the death of Kunchan Nambiyar which is believed to have been in 1770. There were several composers of verse, but few could claim originality. It was a period of literary confusion. Swāti Tirunāḷ (1813-47) was not only a great composer of Carnatic music, but a progressive ruler and an erudite scholar in music, dance and literature. He was also a patron of all the arts. Two bards of his court, Irayimman Thampi (Irayimman Tampi, 1783-1856) and Karindran Thampuran (Karīndran Tampurān, 1812-46) were famous. *Kīcakavadham*, *Dakṣayāgam* and *Uttarā Swayamvaram* are works of Irayimman Thampi, who endeared himself to every one in Kerala with his famous lullaby that begins with the couplet

> Ōmaṅa Tiṅkaḷ Kiṭāvo—nalla
> Kōmaḷa Tāmara Pūvo....

Here is an echo in verse of the fancies of a mother, who compares the face of her child with all the beautiful things in the world, one after the other, and finally comes to the conclusion that he is the young Lord Krishna Himself in a baby. There is no other song in Malayalam that blends so harmoniously the quality of music and poetic fancy. Some more songs, including a *Kummippāṭṭu* (a dance song popular among women) from *Uttarā Swayamvaram Āṭṭakkatha*, are popular even today. Irayimman Thampi cannot claim Unnayi Warier's deep vision of life or skill in delineating characters. Yet Thampi is unique in his capacity to compose simple, grand and exquisite songs (*padams*) of haunting appeal.

Apart from stanza and song (*ślokam* and *padam*), there is *daṇḍakam*, a rhythmically important, long stanza. The most famous and perfect of the *daṇḍakas* is by common consent the one in *Kīcakavadham*, which begins 'Kṣōnirōpatniyuṭe....'. While the Pandavas were in exile, Pāñchali was constrained to live in the court of King Virāṭa. The queen asked Panchali to go to the bedchamber of the king. At this moment Panchali's mind experienced untold perplexity and this famous *daṇḍakam* explains with clarity all those subtle changes of feeling and sentiment. It also reveals the unequalled skill of Irayimman Thampi in expressing emotional tension with his mastery over words, rhythm and music.

The poet Vidwan Koyitampuran of Kilimanoor, widely known as Karindran, was a classmate and friend of Swati Tirunal from childhood. His *Rāvaṇavijayam* (Victory of Ravana) has made a mark in *Āṭṭakkatha* literature with its novel ideas and approach. In this work Ravana appears as a valiant hero with masculine qualities and individuality akin to that of Rama. The scene in which Ravana visits Rambha, one of the celestial celebrities, thrills lovers of Kathakali. After these two poets, many works of the *Āṭṭakkatha* genre were written, but they followed the beaten track.

Veṇmaṇi School of Poetry

The 19th century is important in Malayalam literature as it was then that the diction of poetry was 'Malayalamized' though the Sanskrit metre continued to be used. Cherusseri parambu Nambudiri (c. 1690–1780) wrote single, self-stanzas of this type, paving the way for the inauguration of the *Veṇmaṇi* school of poetry, which was more communicative and popular. This school of poetry is associated with the names of Venmani Achan (Veṇmaṇi Acchan) and Venmani Mahan (Veṇmaṇi Mahan), father and son. However, the origin of this school should be traced to the Kodungalloor Kovilakam (court) which was a *Kalari* (training centre), where poets were trained in extempore versification employing euphonic Malayalam words of wide currency. Pūntōṭṭam Nambūtiri (1821–65) and

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Venmani Achan Namboodiri (1817–91) were the leading poets of this school. A galaxy of poets, including Venmani Mahan, Kochunni Thampuran of Kodungalloor, Kunhikuṭṭan Thampurān, Naduvath Achan Nambudiri, Naduvath Mahan, Kāṭthullil Achutha Menon, Oravaṅkara Nīlakaṇṭan Nambūdiri, Kundoor Narayana Menon, Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon, Śīvoḷḷi Nārāyaṇan Nambūdiri and Pettarazhiyam Raman Ilayatu also wrote profusely during this period. Their works became popular with the advent of the printing press, when magazines devoted to poetry began publication.

A specially noteworthy work of this period was *Śrī Mahabhāratam* by Kodungalloor Kunhikuttan Thampuran (1865–1908), whose talents were a legacy from Venmani Achan. This gigantic work was a translation into Malayalam, stanza by stanza, of Vyasa's Mahabharatam. Such a work, by a single poet, was without parallel in, perhaps, the whole of Indian literature. Kunhikuttan Thampuran accomplished the feat in 874 days. It was a unique case of *dṛuta kavaṅam* (instant composition) by a poet who held that Ezhuthachan's style was the best model for poetry.

The poets of this school had a decisive influence on the poetic language of later times, though it can be safely said that the poets of the *Veṇmaṇi* school seldom composed serious works. To them, writing was only a pastime, like chess. Four of them (Venmani Mahan, Kochunni Thampuran, Naduvath Achan and Oravankara) wrote an *Ambōpadēśam* each, on the model of *Vaiśikatantram*, that maternal paean to courtesanship. The poets of this school also revelled in another pastime: comparing contemporary poets to flowers, birds and characters from the epics. Some examples are: (1) *Kavipuṣpamāla* by Venmani Mahan, (2) *Kavi mṛgāvali* by Oduvil Kunhikrishna Menon, (3) *Kavi Rāmāyaṇam* by Mooloor S. Padmanabha Panikkar and (4) *Kavi Bhāratam* by Kunjukuttan Thampuran. *Pūra Prabandham* by Venmani Mahan Nambudiri, a typical work, embodies both the merits and defects of this kind of poetry. The theme of the poem revolves around the lascivious personal experiences of the poet while journeying to Trichur to participate in the 'Pūram' festival. The criticism levelled against this poetry was that everything, even love, pathos and the miraculous turned hilariously humorous in the hands of the poets of this school. These poets were also interested in rendering translations. In addition to the translation of Mahabharatam, Kunhikuttan Thampuran rendered *Śuka Sandēśam*, *Kōkilasandēśam*, *Vikromōrvaśiyam* and *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇī* from Sanskrit into Malayalam. He also translated *Hamlet* and *Othello* from English. He wrote letters in verse and even carried on his conversations in rhyme and metre.

Maṇipravāḷa Śākuntalam (1882) by Kerala Varma Valiya Koyilthampuran (1845–1915) and *Malayāḷa Śākuntalam* by A. R. Rajaraja Varma (1863–1918) are the Malayalam versions of Kalidasa's *Śākuntala*. A. R. also translated *Mēghasandēśa* and *Kumārasambhavam*. There were, during this period, several translations from Sanskrit and English. Kundoor Narayana Menon (1861–1936), however, attempted poems in pure Malayalam, devoid of any Sanskrit. He wrote three poems, in this style, *Kōmappan*, *Karṇan*, and *Śaktan Tampurān*. But his was an isolated exercise in the wilderness that acquired no followers.

Mayūrasandēśam (Peacock Messenger) of Kerala Varma Valiya Koyilthampuran is another prominent work of this period. It is notable for its qualities of assonance and melody. It was written on the basis of his own experience; but he had closely imitated the *Mēghasandēśam* in every respect. Being in the grip of formalism, the poet failed to transmute his own poignant experiences into appealing poetry. Seevolli Namboodiri wrote a parody of a *sandēśa kāvya* entitled *Dātyūha Sandēśam* to satirize imitation message poems. In this humorous poem an owl is the carrier of the message.

The *Mahākāvya* on the Sanskrit model was introduced to Malayalam by Azhakathu Padmanabha Kurup who wrote *Rāmacandra Vilāsam* (1902). Following this, many *mahākāvyas* were written. Of these, *Rugmāṅgada Caritam* by Pandalam Kerala Varma, *Kēśavīyam* by K. C. Kesava Pillai, *Umākēraḷam* by Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, *Citrayōgam* by Vallathol Narayana Menon, *Malayām Kollam* and *Pāṇḍavōdayam* by Kochunni Thampuran, *Śrī Yēśu Vijayam* by Kattakkayathil Cheriyan Mappilai, *Vēda Vihāram* by K. V. Simon and *Israel Vamśam* by Pravithanam Devasya are particularly notable. Of the three great poets of the Renaissance—Kumaran Asan, Ulloor and Vallathol—Asan alone did not write a *mahākāvya*. In fact, Asan offered a frank and fearless criticism of the *mahākāvya* movement while reviewing Vallathol's *Citrayōgam*. No trace of that tradition is noted in Asan's *Śrī Buddha Caritam*, which is a free rendering of Edwin Arnold's famous epic poem, *The Light of Asia*. The period of *mahākāvya pṛasthānam* in Malayalam was too short though such epic works continue to appear even now.

In the above brief survey of traditional poetry extending over 700 years, several poets and several works had to be left out so as to focus on the peaks. In the early period, before Malayalam poetry attained a standardized literary style, there was a triple stream which flowed almost simultaneously, the *Pāṭṭu*, the *Maṇipṛavāḷa* and the indigenous folk poetry (see section 2). Because of the mutual integrating influence, the rigid rules of the Tamil and Sanskrit schools came to be relaxed and the spoken form attained a maturity and depth, which is exemplified in *Kṛṣṇa Gātha*. It moved large masses of people for long periods and thus became accepted as a classic. However, for a full flowering of the poetic style with spiritual, artistic and linguistic worth, Malayalees had to wait for the *Kiḷippāṭṭus* by Ezhuthachan, who made classical language at once popular and profound. The influence of the Tamil stream waned around the 15th

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century, but that of Sanskrit continued down the centuries, even though there was an unostentatious pressure of the democratic trend and consequent widening of appeal; which is most obvious in Kunchan Nambiyar's *Tuḷḷal* compositions. At the same time, the elitist pull is clear in the *Āṭṭakkathās*. Through such vicissitudes, traditional poetry in Malayalam has progressed, widened its appeal and prepared the way for renaissance and modernization.

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Marathi

S. R. KULKARNI

Introduction

Marathi poetry claims its beginnings in A.D. 1129, if not earlier, with the first recorded Marathi song quoted by Someswara, a Chalukya King (1126–38) of Kalyani, in his encyclopaedic Sanskrit work *Mānasollās* (1129). This was followed by the first Marathi work, the *Viveka-Sindhū* (An Ocean of Thoughts) by Mukundaraj (Mukundarāja, 12th century), a yogi of the *Natha Pantha*. Presented in the form of a dialogue between a *śiṣya* and his *guru*, the *Viveka-Sindhū* is an exposition of Sankaracharya's philosophy, along with the *Rājayoga* as laid down in the works of the *Natha Pantha*.

Judged from the norms applicable to any first work in a language, the *Viveka-Sindhū* cannot be treated as the first work in the Marathi language because of its maturity of style and effective expression of complex spiritual experiences. Mukundaraj was prompted to write this work in Marathi because of his urge to see that knowledge reaches those who are otherwise unqualified and have no other access to the *Śāstras*, than that available in the Sanskrit language. His purpose, therefore, was not to beautify poetry but to simplify philosophy. Though aware of the critical standards laid down by the Sanskrit *Sāhitya Śāstra*, he deviates deliberately from these standards, as seen from *Viveka-Sindhū*, wherein he states:

> A composition decorated with 'Navarasa' (nine varieties of sentiments) leads us nowhere. The wise, therefore, do not pursue this path of futility. However, skilful he may be in presenting nine 'Rasas' through his poetry, a poet would be unable to achieve philosophical ends. Further, such ornate expressions encourage hypocricy resulting in keeping one away from the *Parmārtha*, the highest goal of life. (tr.)

Mukundaraj, however, did not succeed in laying the foundations for a continued tradition in Marathi poetry

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It was towards the close of the 13th century that the tradition was firmly established by the poets of the *Mahānubhāv* and the *Bhagvat* cults; the latter is popularly known as the *Vārakarī Sampradāya*, the *Vārakarī* being one who regularly goes on a pilgrimage to the Vitthala shrine at Pandharpur. These two cults sharply reacted against the formal religion of their times. Their efforts brought about a socio-religious awakening resulting in the involvement of all sections of the society in the production of literature. A literary renaissance, thus, was brought about, and for the first time Marathi was elevated as a language fit for the propagation of faith, a privilege hitherto solely enjoyed by Sanskrit.

Seven Centuries of Traditional Marathi Poetry

During the seven hundred years of its existence, traditional Marathi poetry witnessed many ups and downs because of the changing conditions, political as well as social. Although new trends were added during the course of time and the earlier ones modified, the poetry progressed only in a single direction, namely, that of bhakti.

For the purpose of critical assessment, however, the poetry written during these seven hundred years can be considered under four periods:

(*i*) *The Literary Awakening*: Its end marked by the death of Saint Namdev (1350), this period saw the spread of Muslim rule over Maharashtra.

(*ii*) *The Darkness and the Dawn*: Political and religious domination by the Muslims adversely affected the cultural atmosphere and also the growth of literature. Conditions however improved after two centuries, and the stage for revival was set up by 1680.

(*iii*) *The Great Revival*: With the establishment of *swarāj*, there was all-round activity in the literary sphere. Revival of the classical traditions was the main feature of this age (1680–1800).

(*iv*) *The Period of Transition*: With the advent of the British rule over Maharashtra, old values started losing their significance, while the new ones had yet to find their way. This period of transition (1800–85) saw the gradual end of traditional Marathi poetry.

The Literary Awakening

The credit for the literary awakening in this age was shared by two faiths: the *Mahānubhāva Panth* and the *Vārakarī Sampradāya*. These two faiths held divergent views on life and philosophy. But on two essential points they agreed fully:

(i) The need to modify conventional religion, and
(ii) The recognition of Marathi as a language for the propagation of religion and culture.

It is interesting to note that the activities of these two faiths commenced almost in the same period. In a way it was a protest against the Vedic tradition which had been reduced to ritualism during the last years of the rule of the Yadava dynasty. The Yadavas had their capital at Devagiri, subsequently named Daulatabad by Mohamad Tuglaq, who shifted his capital there from Delhi. The activities of these two faiths, which were centred around the man in the street, gave a great impetus to Marathi literature in general and Marathi poetry in particular.

The Poetry of the Mahānubhāvas. Founded by Sri Chakradhara (c. 1274), the *Mahānubhāva Panth* does not accept the supremacy either of the Vedas or of the Vedic traditions. Having firm faith in *ahimsa* and the ascetic way of life, this *Panth* insisted that Marathi alone should be the language used for the propagation of the faith. This contributed substantially to the growth of Marathi literature. The Mahānubhāvas have better achievements to their credit in prose than in poetry. The poetry of the Mahanubhavas is much influenced by the Sanskritic tradition. Most of the poets of the earlier age follow the pattern of the Sanskrit *mahākāvya*. Bhaskarbhatt Borikar (Bhāskarbhaṭṭa Borikar) in his *Śiśupāl vadh* (Slaying of Sisupal, 1308) openly accepts that he has been inspired by the 'path of the *mahākavis*'. The *Mūrti Prakāśa* (Light of the Idol, 1292) of Keshavraj Suri (Keśavarāja Sūri) can also be mentioned as one of the works following the Sanskrit *mahākāvya* pattern. *Riddhipura Varṇana* (Description of Riddhipur, 1331) and *Sahyādri Varṇana* (Description of Sahyadri, 1333), however, set a new trend. These works describe the sanctity of the places with great devotion. Narindra, the gratest poet of the age has freely borrowed from Banabhatta's *Kādambarī* and Harsha's *Naiṣadhīya Carita*, in his monumental work *Rukmiṇī Swayamvara* (Rukmini's Marriage to Lord Krishna, 1292). Though Narindra follows the general pattern of the Sanskrit classical style, he choses at times to be unconventional. In *Rukmiṇī Swayamvara*, for example, the graphic description of the impact of music on the court of King Bhismak, father of Rukmini, is not in keeping with the traditional style and hence can be treated as a result of his poetic genius.

The context is this:

Rukmini has reached marriageable age. Her father is anxious to find a suitable match for her. Accidentally some 'Kinnaras' (divine singers) visit the court of the king and present songs in praise of Lord Krishna, in a variety of *rāgās*. (On hearing the music the entire court was overwhelmed with tides of happiness. More so was Rukmini who was lost in the melody like a tender branch of a *candan* tree cut off by an arrow. The king on seeing the condition of his daughter skilfully warded off the 'Kinnaras' to see that Rukmini is not carried away too

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far by the effect of the music). The Kinnaras' music had an unparalleled impact. Components of *rāgās* brought with them a cycle of relevant emotions. *Rāgās* and sentiments got interwoven. The abstract colour was further embellished by sweetening of emotions. It appeared as if the entire universe was engulfed with a melody fragrant with emotions. (tr.)

Vachaharaṇa (Taking Away of the Calves; between 1292 and 1316) by Damodar Pandit (Dāmodara Paṇḍita) is a simple narrative based on a story appearing in the Bhagwat Puran. Damodar Pandit is more known for his *choupadīs*, in Marathi and Hindi, which are musical compositions based on various *rāgās*.

The poetry of the Mahānubhāva Panth of this age shows two distinct trends; the impact of classical Sanskrit poetry, and the emotive utterances inspired by devotion to the founder of the faith. After the 14th century, however, the poetry of this *panth* lost its glow, and it was dulled into the merely traditional. The introduction of a code script for writing the works of this faith in 1353 kept the literature of the Mahānubhāvas quite distinct from the main stream, making the interaction of the main stream of literature with the Mahānubhāva works quite impossible.

The Poetry of the Vārkarī Sampradāya. Founded by Jnyaneshwar (Jñāneśvara, 1275–93), the Bhagwat cult was the more effective partner in the literary awakening achieved by the age. Unlike the Mahānubhāvas, this cult respects the Vedas and the Vedic traditions. Conventionalism in religion is not accepted by this cult, which aims at social equality and simplification of the religion and religious practices, so that they appeal to the emotions of the common man and are within his easy reach.

Marathi assumed the role of a vehicle for the propagation of this faith, not so much out of the love the saints had for their mother tongue as such, but because it reached the hearts of the downtrodden who were otherwise ill-equipped for sublimating their lives. The tyranny of Sanskrit was challenged. 'If God made Sanskrit', asked Ekanatha, 'did Prakrit come from thieves?' The Bhagwat cult was successful in creating a social upsurge, which inspired both the high and low classes to adhere to the noblest moral standards of life. As a result of this awakening, gifted men and women from all sections of society were encouraged to participate in literary and cultural acitivities. The poetry of this cult adopted only such forms as were handed down by the folk tradition. The classical style of Sanskrit literature had no impact on the poetry of the Bhagwat cult.

Jnyaneshwar excels all poets of this age both in variety of forms and depth of poetic imagination. Author of *Jñāneśvari*—a commentary on the Bhagwat Gita, *Amṛtānubhava* (The Nectar of Experience), *Cāṅgadeva Pāsasīt* (Sixty-five Verses Addressed to Changadeva, a contemporary) and a number of occasional writings on two forms of the *Abhaṅga* and the *Padas*, which can be sung in a variety of *rāgās*, Jnyaneshwar is confident of his poetic capabilities. *Jñāneśvari*, the scripture of the Bhagwat cult is also a superb poetic work of about 1800 *ovīs*. Its varied literary splendours match its philosophical depth, and make it one of the noblest works in the language. It is, according to some scholars, an original creative work and not a mere commentary on the *Gītā*. Behind it is supreme confidence in the capability of the Marathi language. Says he, 'My simple, homely Marathi I shall use with such grace that it will win a wager with nectar itself.'

W. B. Patwardhan, a critic of the early years of the century pays the following tribute to the musical quality of Jnyaneshwar:

> With Jnyaneshwar the *ovī* metre trips, it gallops, it dances, it whirls, it ambles, it trots, it runs, it takes long leaps or short jumps, it halts or sweeps along, evolves a hundred and one graces of movements at the master's hands. In music of sound too it reveals mysterious capacity of manifold evolution—the thrill, the quiver, the thunder, the hollow, the murmur, the grumble, in fact every shade of sound it wields when occasion demands.

At the end of his devoted labours, Jnyaneshwar prays to the Lord for the following blessing:

> May the wicked shed their crookedness, and cultivate love for the good. May the living beings be in close harmony. May the darkness of evil be dispelled, and the sun of true religion light up the world. May all people achieve what they desire.

New Poetic Values. Jnyaneshwar has also challenged conventionalism in the field of literary criticism. The highest goal of poetry according to him should be 'the realization of the self'. Those unable to reach this height 'should also be able to derive pleasure from the artistic arrangements of words'. He allots *śānta* the first place in the system of *rasas* against *śṛṅgār* which is traditionally recognized as the first of the nine *rasas*. The foundations laid down by Jnyaneshwar in literary criticism were further developed, and built on by Ramdas (Rāmdāsa, ?–1682) in a later period. Jnyaneshwar's brothers, Nivrittinatha and Sopanadeva, and his sister Muktabai also wrote poetry.

Namdev: The Torch-Bearer of the Bhagwat Cult. Among the saints of this age Namdev (Nāmadeva, 1270–1350) rendered a great service in stabilizing the Bhakti cult and also the literary tradition not only in Maharashtra but beyond the frontiers of this region too. Born in a family of tailors Namdev travelled widely carrying the message of this new-found faith. He evolved a variety of literary forms

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to fulfil his mission. He was a trend-setter in biographical and autobiographical writings using the *abhaṅga* metre for them. He was also the first to write narrative poetry with a purpose, known as *Ākhyāna Kavitā*. This consists of a simple narration woven around one of the principles of bhakti. He was also the first to introduce the *kīrtanā* tradition (quite distinct from the *kīrtanās* in South Indian Music). It is a kind of mass entertainment designed to convey effectively the message of the bhakti cult. He is also known for his original and ever-green imagery, and his compositions in a variety of *rāgās*.

Namdev: The First Hindi Poet. One of the outstanding achievements of Namdev is his contribution to Hindi poetry. He is the first poet in Hindi. Due to historical reasons and the broad outlook of the saints, Hindi developed in Maharashtra as a link language of communication in the cultural sphere. Namdev was the first to give literary status to this newly evolved language. His Hindi poetry has to a great extent influenced the writings of such masters as Kabir and Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. Namdev is noted for his compositions in a variety of *rāgās*, some of his Hindi compositions are included in the *Granth Sahib*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. The following translation is that of one of Namdev's songs in the Raga *Bilavel Goud* found in the *Granth Sahib*.

Namdev has seen Vithal (God) today.
But how am I to explain this before
a fool? Oh Brahmin, your cow was
grazing in Lodi's farm who beat her
with his stick and now she is limping.
Oh Pandya (Brahmin) I saw your
Mahadev (Siva) riding on a bull.
I have seen your Ramchandra also
whose wife was taken away by Ravan.
The Hindu is mad and the Muslim has
a defective eye. Only a *Gyani*
(one having full knowledge of God)
is better than these two. The Hindu
goes to temple and Muslim to the mosque.
Namdev however, continues to worship
Him where there is neither temple nor mosque. (tr.)

The tradition of writing poetry in Hindi was kept up by the saints in Maharashtra till the end of the 18th century.

The Social Upheaval. The Bhagwat cult founded by Jnyaneshwar and enriched by Namdev was instrumental in bringing about a social upheaval in Maharashtra. Many bhaktas from the so-called low classes of the society enriched Marathi poetry through their compositions. The late R. D. Ranade has rightly named this age 'the age of spiritual democracy'.

The Age of Achievements

Variety of Forms. In spite of being a formative period, this age can be termed as one of all-round achievement in the sphere of poetry. A variety of forms make their appearance for the first time. They are either evolved independently or adapted from the folk tradition. Spontaneous utterances of personal emotions, biographical and autobiographical expositions, narratives with different dimensions can be listed among the contributions of this age to Marathi poetry. The Sanskritic traditions of the *prabandha* and the *mahākāvya* are found reflected in the poetry of the Mahanubhav cult. Ironically enough, it is found that those who denounced the Vedic tradition could not escape the impact of Sanskritic traditions, while those having respect for all that the Vedic tradition stood for, nursed the folk tradition in poetry. This conforms to the social relevance aimed at by the *Vārkarī Sampradāya*.

Literature: Effective Vehicle of Social Revolution. At no time in the history of Maharashtra, were literature and the dynamics of society so closely interwoven as in this age. The literature of this age not only revolutionized the outlook on religion but was also instrumental in achieving a drastic change in the social values. Accordingly, new critical values for the evaluation of poetry also evolved.

Growing Importance of Music. Musical compositions attained greater importance during this period. Music ceased to be an object of mere entertainment. It was used as a means to stimulate social consciousness for the attainment of noble aims in life. *Abhaṅga* and *Pad* compositions were written in *Gāthā* style of Prakrit literature. 'The Gowlan' (milkmaid singing love songs for Lord Krishna), a combination of classical music and a folk-dance style, was also used to convey the message of bhakti. Another literary composition popularized by the saints was *Bhāruda* (adaptation of folk-drama for the propagation of spiritual message, allegorical and entertaining). This could be staged and acted on the lines of folk-drama.

Emergence of a National Language. The most significant achievement of the age was the emergence of Hindi, as a national language. The link language evolved out of the contact of the Nath *siddhas* with Maharashtrian saints was elevated into a literary language by the saints. Namdev inspired generations of saint-poets in Maharashtra to compose Hindi songs along with their Marathi writings.

The Darkness and the Dawn (1350–1680)

The Darkness. With the invasion by Allauddin Khilji of Devgiri (Daulatabad) in 1296 and the subsequent liquidation of the Yadava dynasty ruling over Maharashtra in 1318,

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the Marathi-speaking region was thrown into darkness, political as well as cultural, bringing all the literary and cultural activities to a standstill.

A change in the ruling dynasty was not an uncommon phenomenon in the history of this land during the pre-Muslim period. Such changes had generally kept the literary and cultural fields unaffected, as the conquerors were largely motivated by political considerations. With the Muslim conquerors it was usually a little different: the religion and culture of the subjugated people suffered a great deal.

In such circumstances, with a ruler hostile to the native faith, the society had to strive for defending its culture, relying entirely on the people's awareness of it. Muslim rule had a debilitating effect on the people for a considerable period. Conditions, however, improved with the saints and the *Dharmaśāstrakārās* (law-givers according to the religious codes) taking a lead in the process of revitalizing and consolidating the society.

Saints of the Bhagwat cult were in the forefront, and most effective in this movement for revitalization and consolidation. Ekanath (Ekanātha, 1532–99) the greatest of the saints of this age, a social reformer and an outstanding poet, through his words and deeds inspired not only his own generation, but the later ones too. He cleared the way for renewed cultural and literary activities, converting the prevailing darkness into a dawn. Thus revived by Ekanath the Bhagwat cult progressed with a new vigour. It brought new dimensions to Marathi poetry. The sense of spiritual brotherhood brought about by the Bhagwat movement, drawing to it men from the lowest castes and communities, is borne out by the list of saint-poets with their names given below and their professions noted in brackets: Gorā Kumbhār (potter), Naraharī Sonār (goldsmith), Senā Nhāvī (barber), Sajan Kasāī (butcher), Sāvatā Māli (gardener), and Chokhā Meḷā (sudra). The emergence of the Vijayanagar kingdom (established in 1336) as a growing power in the South had an effective, though indirect, impact on the efforts of the Maharashtrian society striving for self-preservation and self-expression. Women too were drawn to the movement, a remarkable phenomenon, considering the condition of women in those days. Three such important women saint-poets were: Bahinabai; Muktabai and Sakhu.

Because of the chaotic conditions, the two centuries before the happy change began to be felt, were uneventful in the history of Marathi poetry. Though we come across stray writings from the period, there was hardly any continuity in the work in the literary sphere. Even the popular Bhagwat cult seems to have got entangled and frustrated in the battle for survival. Dissensions in the various elements among the rulers, resulting in the provincial administrators declaring themselves as monarchs softened the rigours of the alien rule—particularly in the cultural field. The Sultan of Madura was the first to rise against the power at Delhi (1334). This proved a precedent for Hasan Gangu Bahmani who in 1337 established his kingdom in the Marathi-speaking region. Disintegration started in the kingdom too (1490), resulting in five provincial governors declaring their independence. Those who revolted and tried to consolidate their position had to rely increasingly on local support. Consequently there was a modification in the policy of these rulers towards non-Muslims, and that probably as a diplomatic measure.

The Dawn. The legend associated with Bhanudas (1448–1513) the great grandfather of Ekanath, is meaningful in this respect. It is said that Sri Vitthal had left Pandharpur, the centre of activity of the Bhagwat cult, as well as its holiest shrine and gone to Vijayanagar on pursuation by the King of Vijayanagar. Bhanudas was instrumental in bringing the deity back to Pandharpur. This only means that the idol of Sri Vitthal, which must have been shifted to Vijayanagar for safety, was brought back when the threat to its safety from the rulers no longer existed. This incident implies that the political situation had improved during the lifetime of Bhanudas, and that the people could pursue their religious and cultural activities without hindrance.

The Revival of the Bhagwat Cult. While Bhanudas restored the idol of Sri Vitthal at Pandharpur, his great-grandson Ekanath restored to the Bhagwat cult its fervour and appeal which had been adversely affected by the changed political conditions. Even the scripture of the Bhagwat cult, the *Jñāneśvari*, the text of which had become corrupted with different readings, had to be restored, which Ekanath did in 1584.

Ekanath was a great saint and an active social reformer. He put new life into the Bhagwat cult through his deeds and writings. Acharya Vinoba Bhave's remarks are quite meaningful in this respect. He says: 'As a general rule the word of an author is always greater than his personality. But in the case of Ekanath this relationship is reversed', meaning thereby that the personality of Ekanath was even greater than the poetic works he left behind.

Besides minor works on philosophical topics and commentaries on some Sanskrit works Ekanath has no less than three thousand *Abhaṅgas* to his credit. Narratives on the lives of saints and bhaktas form a large part of his compositions. Ekanath excels all the saints of his own age and the subsequent ones in compositions known as *Gowlan* (the milkmaid). Sentiment and word-music are interwoven in his description of the lovelorn 'milkmaid'. The pen vivid in describing fierce battles elsewhere becomes extremely tender while portraying the varied emotions of the 'gowlan'.

Bhāruda is another literary form in which Ekanath is matchless. This is an adaptation of folk-drama aimed at inspiring the people to lead a clean and fearless life and reforming society. Rarely do we find a folk tradition so

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so effectively. Ekanath's Hindi and Marathi *Bhārudas* are staged even today on the pattern of a one-man play. Spiced with humour, these entertaining compositions carry home the message of bhakti and social equality.

Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa, a voluminous narrative of forty thousand couplets, out of which twenty-five thousand are composed by Ekanath, is another significant work where we find Ekanath conscious of poetic values as also of the message he has to spread. The *Rāmakathā* (The Story of Rama) related in this work is used allegorically to give the impression that it was written only to stimulate the sentiments of the society against 'The Ravanas' of the age. Ekanath as a seer and a poet is at his best in the *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa*.

But as a reviver of the Bhagwat cult Ekanath's fame mainly rests on his *Eknāthi Bhāgvat* which has been regarded down the centuries as one of the scriptures of the cult. It is a commentary on the eleventh chapter of the *Bhāgvata Purāṇa*. This work, which was completed at Banaras in 1573, outlines the philosophy of the Bhagwat cult. Ekanath's interpretation of the Purana gives a new meaning to the relationship of man with society, and of the universe with God. He identifies the service of humanity with spiritual pursuits. He also perceives God in the form of human society. The Bhagwat cult needed a new orientation in the context of the changed conditions created by the Muslim rule. Ekanath fulfilled the need of the times and also his life's mission by revitalizing the Bhagwat cult.

Poetry with a Purpose. Ekanath is not only the most prolific author of the age but also a poet who writes with a purpose, using different forms of poetry to convey the message of the Bhagwat cult to the masses. Outlining the aims of poetry he says:

> A poetic work should not be voluminous.
> Each word in the work should lead the
> reader to *Paramārth* (spiritual pursuit).
> This should be the interest of poetry.
> (tr. from *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa*, Bālakāṇḍa, 1–118)

While underlining the aim of poetry he is also conscious of the various intellectual levels in the society:

> Mother Poetry, decorated with artistic
> words, pleases all sections of the society.
> Saints are satisfied because of the spiritual
> message conveyed. The artistic structure is a
> cause of pleasure to the scholars.
> The story and the humour touch the heart of the
> common man. Thus the entire world should
> draw satisfaction from a poetic work.
> But the poet on his part should strive
> to make each word conducive to the realization of the
> Divine. This is the soul of poetry which
> keeps the audience happy.
> (tr. from *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa*, Bālakāṇḍa, XIV: 81–84)

He expresses himself strongly against religious hypocrites: 'They talk tall about the gods, and worship stones.'

The poetic genius of Ekanath is just like a bird soaring high in the sky but always mindful of its nest on the earth. This attitude conditioned his poetry. But in a way this also added another dimension to it. It kept the poet busy in search of new forms which would attract the most illiterate. Poetry to him was not an end in itself. It was a means through which he wanted to enter the hearts of the people irrespective of their status and intellectual standards. A close analysis of Ekanath's works will confirm this contention.

While putting new vigour in the Bhagwat cult, Ekanath was successful in bringing about an awakening in the society at all levels. It was not an accident that within half a century of his death (1599) Maharashtra attained its freedom.

'Artistic' Poetry. Moving from Ekanath to Mukteshwara, who was his grandson (on the daughter's side), is moving from poetry with a message to poetry with an emphasis rather on its art and form. Mukteshwara was a scholar in the Sanskrit tradition. His earlier works like *Saṅkṣepa Rāmāyaṇa* (Ramayan Abridged), *Śuka-Rambhā Samvāda* (Dialogue between the Sage Suka and Rambha), *Śatmukha Rāvaṇa Vadha* (Slaying of Ravana of a Hundred Mouths) leave ample evidence of Mukteshwara's sound knowledge of Sanskrit poetry and plays. But his fame as a poet mainly rests on the five *Parvas* of the Mahabharata (*Ādi*, *Sabhā Vana*, *Virāta* and *Souptika*) he rendered in Marathi. In this work Mukteshwara is seen to have developed his own style and diction. Outside the poets of the Mahanubhava Pantha, Mukteshwara is the first Marathi poet to be influenced by the tradition of Sanskrit classical poetry. He is more careful about the aesthetic side of his poetry than of the bhakti content of his narration. While rendering the great epic into Marathi, though he assures the reader that 'only such features as enhance the bhakti content find a place in this work', he is more concerned about the aesthetic pleasure the readers would draw from his works.

The creative genius of Mukteshwara works on the wide canvas of epic poetry, and adds life and colour even to an otherwise familiar story. The personalities moving in the great epic, as depicted by Mukteshwara, reveal his penetrating insight and deep observation of human behaviour. His fancy is wonderful and his imagination striking. Spontaneity in dialogues and dramatic presentation of the story are two attractive features of Mukteshwara's poetry. Being very conscious of the contemporary social and political conditions, he too often makes references to these,

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even at the risk of committing an anachronism. Mukteshwara not only excels all the poets who rendered the Mahabharata into Marathi, but he has made a great impact on the subsequent poets too. Shridhar (Śridhara, 1658–1729), for example, draws freely from Mukteshwara in his *Pāṇḍava Pratāpa*.

Contemporaries of Ekanath. Among the contemporaries of Ekanath, Dasopant (Dasopanta, ?–1551) was even more voluminous a poet than Ekanath. Unfortunately only fragments of what he wrote have been published so far. Besides commentaries on the Upanishads he wrote two commentaries on the Bhagwad Gita, the smaller one comprising 18,000 couplets, and the other over a lakh. He also composed over a lakh of *padas* (compositions for being sung) in different languages like Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, besides Marathi. Judging from his published works, Dasopant appears to be a great scholar and a profound commentator with an independent outlook. However, only some of his *padas* are good as poetry.

Krishna Yajnvalki is another contemporary of Ekanath who deviates from the main stream. His *Kathā-Kalpa-Taru* is only a versification in Marathi of the Sanskrit work of the same title. The famous *Pañcatantra* of Vishnu Sharma was similarly versified during this age. These instances indicate that the Marathi poetry of this age was in search of new pastures besides bhakti and mysticism. *Yogarāj Tilak* of Amritananda and *Hariścandra Ākhyān* of Vishnudas Nama (Viṣṇudāsa Nāma) deserve special mention as these works were translated into the Portuguese language at a later date.

Romantic Poetry: A Solitary Example. It is a pleasant surprise to find a work of romantic poetry long before Mukteshwara. It is *Uṣāharaṇa* by Chombha, a poet who is placed by scholars in the 15th century. Chombha was a fisherman by caste and a disciple of one Narahari Tirthas He was grateful to his Guru for having blessed one of a 'lower birth'. In spite of his professed ignorance, the poet reveals an intimate knowledge of the Puranas and the Mahabharata. Though his poetry is not influenced by Sanskritic traditions, he deviates from the main stream of Bhakti and mysticism and pays more attention to the poetic values in his work.

The theme selected by Chombha for this work is a romantic one. Banasura, an enemy of Krishna has a daughter by name Usha. She falls in love with a person she sees in her dreams. This 'man of the dreams' was later identified as Aniruddha, grandson of Krishna. Chitrarekha, a close friend of Usha who succeeds in identifying the hero of her dreams, takes the initiative in this love-affair, and brings about a secret meeting of the two at the palace of Banasura. The news however leaks out and a battle follows. But Usha's persuasive charm brings the battle to an end, and the enemies become guests at the wedding.

The poet gives full scope to his imagination in the na-ration. Places and personalities are depicted in a colourf manner.

The Muse Liberated. Chombha's *Uṣāharaṇa* and the poe of Mukteshwara indicate that efforts were afoot to rele Marathi poetry from the narrow confines of bhak Hitherto the Muse was required to play second fiddle bhakti. But here were the beginnings of the liberation of t Muse from its confines. Poetry would now be written f aesthetic pleasure too. There was more of such poetry the age that followed.

The Mahabharata Gains Importance. Another new tre in the age is the growing importance of the great Sansk epic Mahabharata. History and tradition play an importa role in the efforts of any society striving to regain its l identity. The Mahabharata, which is otherwise call *Itihāsa* (history), must have attracted the attention of t poets as they could infuse pride of the heritage in the mass through it. This is evident from the Marathi renderings the epic, which give 'bhakti' secondary importance.

The Contribution of Jainism. Along with the *Mahānubhā Panth* and the *Vārkarī Sampradāya*, Jainism too enrich Marathi poetry in this age. Most of the Jain poets of the a were migrants from Gujarat who had learned Marathi be able to propagate their faith in Maharashtra. T Marathi poets too were well-acquainted with some Gu rati works. This resulted in the introduction of some form of Gujarati literature into Marathi. *Rāso* and *Faga* can listed amongst them. The stories of the *Tīrthankaras*, t Jain apostles, in the Purana style, also owe their origin Gujarati. *Sreṇika Caritra* (Biographies of some Jain Sai by Brahmagunadasa (15th century) is the first Marathi w on Jainism. Megharaja's *Jasodhar Rāsa* (16th centur the *Padma Purāṇa* of Gunakriti, the *Harivaṃśa Purāṇa* Jinadasa, the *Jasodhar Purāṇa* of Gunanandi dese mention as significant works of the kind with some liter flavour.

The Marathi Poetry of Christian Missionaries. Forei Christian missionaries who came to India after the Por guese power established itself on the Western coast rea that the best way to spread the Gospel among the nat was to address them in their own language. Father Tho Stephens (1549–1619) took the lead in this respect by a rendering of the Holy Bible into Marathi in two volu *Krista Purāṇa*, as this rendering is known, is remark Marathi in form, closely following the Marathi classics *Jñāneśvari*. He begins his *Krista Purāṇa* with salutation the Almighty using the same terminology as had been by Saint Jnyaneshwar and others:

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I bow to Thee, Creator of the Universe.
Oh All-powerful, you are an ocean of
piety and bliss. It is not possible to
see your beginning and end. Blissful
Light of knowledge, the whole of Universe
is persuaded by you. You alone are Unmanifested,
Infinite and without any attribute.
Creation of the World, the Heaven, the Moon
and the Planets is an easy play with you.
A single word from you sanctifies the World.
Ignorance withers away when you enter our
minds. Your love showers sweetness of nectar upon us.
(tr.)

(In the original text all adjectives of God are much the same as used by the followers of the Advaita philosophy). Father Stephens has high praise for Marathi. He compares its loveliness to 'the mogara among flowers, the musk among scents, the blue diamond among jewels and the peacock among birds'. The missionaries who followed Father Stephens, like the Frenchman, Father Elienne De La Croin (1579–1643), or Father Antonio de Saldhana (?–1613) were not as successful, though they took pains to translate Christian works into Marathi.

Eventful Years. The early years of the 17th century were the most eventful in the political and literary history of medieval Maharashtra. During these times, Shahaji, father of Shivaji, was trying to consolidate his position as a military power, and also as a patron of learning. His mini-durbar at Bangalore attracted scholars and poets from the North as well as the South. The literature produced in this environment was more broad-based, and had a better understanding of literary trends in the neighbouring languages. Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Marathi literatures witnessed their golden age when the successors of Shahaji shifted their capital to Thanjavur in Tamilnadu. The *Campu* and the *Prabandha* style introduced subsequently in Marathi literature can be regarded as a substantial contribution of this interaction of languages which began in Bangalore and developed later in Thanjavur.

In Maharashtra the establishment of Swaraj by Shivaji marks the beginning of a flourishing period in Marathi literature. Though crowned in 1674, Shivaji had been a *de facto* ruler since 1645. Tukaram, the greatest saint-poet of the Bhagwat cult, was a senior contemporary of Shivaji, while Ramdas, another great saint-poet, started his career as a social organizer, a little later, his work coinciding with and complementing the efforts of the Marathas to carve out an independent kingdom and establish their political identity. The identity widened beyond politics, and brought new aspirations to the people.

The Climax in Devotional Poetry. For over three hundred years Tukaram (1608–49) has been the most revered among the saint-poets of Maharashtra, to the high and low alike. Hundreds of thousands chant his *abhaṅgas* as they tread the path to Pandharpur, the holiest shrine for the Bhagwat cult, to get there by the *Āṣāḍhī Ekādaśī*, the eleventh day of the month of *Āṣāḍha*. Tukaram carried the cult to the distant corners of Maharashtra and to the lowest strata of society. As Bahinabai, a disciple of Tukaram, puts it, using the metaphor of a temple,

Jnanadeva laid the foundation . . . .
Tuka has become the pinnacle. (tr.)

Tukaram was a Sudra by birth who kept a shop and tilled his modest field. Unpractical by nature, he could hardly make a living by these, and a severe famine blighted the family. That a Sudra should write poetry and perform *kīrtans* invited persecution by the upper classes. A popular legend has it that some Brahmins sank the manuscripts of his *abhaṅgas* in the river, but that after some time they were found floating on the surface of the stream, dry and unspoilt. The legend has been interpreted to mean that the people had treasured the *abhaṅgas* in their memory, which were therefore indestructible.

Tukaram wrote three thousand *abhaṅgas*. Their appeal is timeless. Even by 'modern' standards, they are great poetry. They express complex spiritual experience, and homely experience as well; and the two blend. It is often a poetry of argument: he argues with himself, and he argues with God. 'Day and night it is a battle for us, in the world without, and within.'

Spontaneity and simplicity are important features of Tukaram's writings. 'My poetry is not a minted coin. It is an innate flow of butter which would be good to the people who take it', he says. And also, 'the inner emotions spontaneously flow out. It is not possible to suppress this flow'. With all their apparent simplicity, his poems have a deep native wisdom in them. And they are also, to him, instruments of awakening the lowly.

In our houses words are the only jewels,
And of words we shall fashion our weapons. (tr.)

He did it effectively to attack ritual, pedantry and hypocrisy. He denounced the caste system, particularly the arrogance of the Brahmins:

Good that I was born a *kunabi* (a low caste person)
Else I would have died of self-righteousness. (tr.)

He is a poet of equality, and of the dignity of man, whatever his condition of life. Truly a poet of the masses. Hundreds of his verses are mouthed by even illiterate persons; they have, like proverbs, an aphoristic quality having a meaning

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in their everyday life. No symbolism or affectations of learning and literary art stand between them and their poet.

The Nationalistic Urge. Ramadas (Rāmadāsa, 1608–81) who was a junior contemporary of Tukaram distinguished himself in inspiring and consolidating the nationalistic urge of the times. Having travelled widely he could see the agony of the people under Muslim rule. His determination to establish the 'rule of Dharma' was a result of his first-hand experience of the sufferings of the people. Shivaji treated him as his Guru. It is a controversial matter whether Ramadas inspired and guided Shivaji during the formative years of the latter's career as the liberator of Maharashtra. But it cannot be denied that Ramadas' vision of *ānandvana-bhuvan*—a happy Maharashtra free from the tyranny of an alien power—was identical with the aim Shivaji had been striving for since his early days.

Ramadas' achievements in the literary sphere are also equally significant. Poetic values as such have only a minor place in his works, which are designed to be philosophical expositions and have a didactic purpose. In his miscellaneous writings in Marathi and Hindi, and also in the 'Sunder' and the *Yuddha Kāṇḍa* of his Ramayana, we find Ramadas at his best as a poet. Here word and sound, music and emotions embellish each other. He is superb in the descriptt-ion of battles, and in his musical compositions based on a variety of *rāgās*.

In his encyclopaedic work *Dāsabodha*, Ramadas deals with a great variety of subjects most of them concerning the practical world. He holds the firm opinion that all pursuits, worldly and spiritual, should have a single goal: the protection of Dharma. Poetry is no exception to this. Poetry, he said, is a garland of flowers, the fragrance of which should please the saints. Versified words without innate experience, according to him, cannot be termed as poetry. But his 'dharma' is not an other-worldly abstraction. It is to do with daily life: in one's conduct, one's relationship with others, one's duties to the community. One must live a full life within the framework of morality. To organize life in order to achieve such fullness, for the individual and the community, is *Rājakāraṇa* (the principal problem) to him, and in that wide sense he is a 'political' poet. He set up *maṭhs* (a kind of monastery) all over the region for the propagation of Rama-worship and the establishment of 'dharma' through it. His 'dharma', apart from its political aspect, was all for the old order: *Cāturvarṇya* and the caste-system.

In Ramadas' design for living, *Prapañca* (the house-holder's normal life) and *Paramārtha* coexist in harmony. Doing one's duty is a way of worshipping God.

> Manage your *prapañca* capably: and then apply yourself to *paramārtha*. If you attempt *paramārtha* by giving up *prapañca*, you will be unhappy. Such teaching instilled into the people a positive attitude to life which made for strength and stability in the times that followed.

Some Muslim Poets of the Age. In sharp contrast to the hostility of the rulers to their non-Muslim subjects, the existence of Muslim poets in the mainstream of the Bhagwat cult is indeed a pleasant surprise. Shah Muntoji Brahmani, a member of the ruling Bahamani dynasty is known for his *Prakāśa Dīpa* (Torch Light) and *Siddha Saṅketa* (Characteristic Features of Those Who Have Attained Full Bliss), both works on the advaita philosophy. Sheikh Mohammed (1550–1660) was the author of *Yoga Saṅgrāma* (Battle of the Yoga, 1645) and many other minor works in the *abhaṅga* and other metres. *Husain Ambarī* (1653) was a commentary on the Bhagvad Gita, named after the author Husain Amberkhan. The poetry of Alamkhan, Garib Abdul and the occasional compositions of many other Muslims indicate that the Marathi poetry of the age was getting more secular, without losing its philosophical depth.

Towards a Full Day. In spite of the darkness of about two centuries in the beginning, this period is noteworthy for various reasons. The revival of the Bhagwat cult by Ekanath stimulated literary and cultural activities. His purposeful poetry put new life into a decaying society. The poetry written for aesthetic pleasure opened up a new direction while the nationalistic urge was manifested in the works of Ramadas. These trends led to the emergence of a great revival in literature.

The Great Revival (1680–1800)

This period of a hundred and twenty years can be termed as a period of all-round prosperity. It is an interesting phenomenon that the period in which Marathi poetry flourished very well should coincide with the expansion of Maratha rule, though none of the Maratha rulers, except those who ruled at Thanjavur, were patrons of Marathi literature. The Maratha rulers of Thanjavur, however, were great patrons not only of Marathi literature but also of the literatures in Sanskrit and the South Indian languages. A variety of new forms were introduced in Marathi poetry while the devotional poetry of the earlier period took a new turn.

Classical Traditions Revived. The important achievement of this age was the revival of classical traditions. Except in the poetry of Mahānubhāvās of the 14th and the 15th centuries, Marathi poetry was never much influenced by the classical Sanskrit traditions in general, and the *Mahākāvya* and the *Prabandha* traditions in particular. A new pattern which was a synthesis of the *Prabandha* and the *Mahākāvya* was evolved by the poets of this age generally known as *Ākhyāna-Kāvya*, it is composed in various Sanskrit metres

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and is at times punctuated by rhythmical prose passages resembling the *Campu* style which was very popular in those days in Telugu and Kannada poetry. These poets are usually called *Paṇḍita* poets. The trend-setters in this new form were Raghunath Pandita and Anandatanaya. Both of them were migrants from South India. Raghunath Pandita's most important work is *Naladamayantī Svayamvara* which was translated into Persian. According to some scholars, Raghunath Pandita was one of Shivaji's ministers. Amritrai (1698-1753) and Niranjan Madhav (1728–68) developed this form further. Amritrai, with his creative touch, added new colour to it by using Persian metres, and at times a bilingual style, along with compositions in a variety of *rāgās* in Hindustani music. Sarfoji Bhosale (1711–28), Raja of Thanjavur, added another dimension to *Ākhyāna-Kāvya* by restructuring it, and making it suitable for presentation in the *Bharata Nāṭya* style.

Another impact of this revival was the growing importance of Nature in Marathi poetry. Seasonal variations of Nature were found described on the lines of Sanskrit *mahākāvyas*. Some of the poets have shown originality in these traditional descriptions. Mukteshwara of the earlier period and Vaman Pandit of this period can be mentioned in this respect. A piece from the *Venusudha* of Vaman Pandit will give an idea of this trend. The context is: Lord Krishna with his flute could attract both the cattle and his friends who were out by the side of the Yamuna to look after the cattle. One of the gopis who witnessed the scene, relates it to Yasoda, mother of Krishna thus:

I saw Krishna playing with his flute and
painted him on my heart with the colour of
love. It was wonderful to see the flute
enthralling the cows and the cowherds alike.
Bees were humming and it appeared as if
they were playing to the accompaniment of
the flute. Birds of the forest too
flocked and were sitting with closed eyes,
like yogis in their *samādhi*. The cloud
had particular affinity towards the
Lord, as both of them shared the same
colour. In a way, they had identical
function to perform. Both of them carried
jīvan (meaning life in the context of Lord Krishna
and water in the context of the cloud). True to
his friendship the cloud covered the Lord with
his body to protect him from the Sun. The cloud
also took precaution to keep its voice lower
than that of the flute played by the Lord,
thus performing *kīrtan bhakti*. The wind
also joined in and managed to keep the cloud-umbrella
steady over the head of the Lord. Not only
men and cows but even the gods were immersed
in the music generated by Lord's flute. (tr.)

Mahabharata: The Spirit of the Times. The *Ākhyāna-Kāvya* developed in this age relied more on the great epic Mahabharata for its themes. In the context of contemporary political history this can be treated as a significant departure from the earlier tradition. In the history of Maharashtra the period from 1680 to 1772 was not only crucial, but was also full of political activities. With Sambhaji put to death by Aurangzeb and the successor king in exile, the common man stood up against the military power of the Mughals to defend Swaraj. Ultimately he emerged triumphant. This explains why the poets and the people too turned towards the Mahabharata for inspiration. Marathi renderings of Mahabharata by Madhava Swami of Thanjavur (?–1703), Sridhar (?–1703) and Moropant (?–1788) can be listed in this context. These works reflect the spirit of the age.

A New Turn in the Poetry of the Bhakti Cult. The poetry of the Bhakti cult too took a new turn. With the death of Tukaram and Ramadas the emotive and didactic elements in the Bhakti cult were reduced to a lifeless convention as no poet with a creative genius and spiritual attainment succeeded these great figures of the Bhakti cult. This, perhaps, opened a new avenue for the poetry of the Bhakti cult in the form of biographies of saints and devotees. Namadev and Ekanath had already made a beginning in this respect, but no suitable form of biographical writings had been evolved until this age. Uddhava Chitghana (end of the 17th century) was the pioneer in this respect. Mahipati (1715–90) carried the form to perfection through four of his works: *Bhakti-Vijaya* (The Triumph of Bhakti, 1762), *Santa-Līlāmṛta* (Nectar of the Actions of Saints), *Bhakta-Līlāmṛta* (Nectar of the Actions of Devotees) and *Santa Vijaya* (The Triumph of Saints). In spite of the legendary and mystical nature of these works, the generations that followed Mahipati have felt immensely obliged to him for leaving behind important details regarding the saints of Maharashtra and the other regions of this land. Among the poets of the *Ramadāsī Sampradāya* (The Creed of Ramadas) also we find poet-biographers, concentrating on the life of Ramadas. As some of them were his contemporaries, the details given by them regarding Ramadas have greater importance. Bhima Swami, a contemporary of Ramadas and chief of the *Maṭha* at Thanjavur (end of the 17th century) and Dinakar Gosavi (1628–1700) another contemporary of Ramadas, deserve mention in this context. *Samartha Pratāpa* (1722) is another notable work. The *Dāsaviśramadhāma* of Atmarama is an elaborate work giving not only biographical details of Ramadas, but also the important events of his time.

Some of the outstanding poets representing these major trends may be considered.

Vaman Pandit (Vāmana Paṇḍita, 1608–95). This great poet is more popular for his *Ākhyāna Kāvyas* than for his

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voluminous work *Yathārtha Dipikā* (Elucidator of the Exact Meaning, 1673–95) which is a commentary on the Gita giving it a different interpretation from that of Jnaneshwar (Dnyāneswar). Vaman Pandit uses Sanskrit metres with ease. Fine diction, aesthetic sense and effective characterization make his works attractive. He is more popular with the reader who has adequate learning in Sanskrit; but to the common reader his writing is sometimes obscure.

Shridhar. In contrast with Vaman Pandit, Shridhar has been a poet of the masses. In addition to the Marathi rendering of the Mahabharata he has to his credit the Marathi versions of the Ramayana and the *Bhāgavat Purāṇa*. *Śivalīlāmṛt* (Nectar of Siva's Actions, 1718) is one of his most popular works. *Pāṇḍavapratāpa* (The Heroic Actions of the Pandavas) too has been recited in thousands of homes. Shridhar is an effective story-teller. His works were successful in spreading the message of religion and culture to the lowest level of the society.

Right from Mukundraj, the first Marathi poet, to the poets of this era of the traditional Marathi, almost every poet had to impress upon his readers, that Marathi had the potentiality for expression as compared to Sanskrit. They argued that Marathi was nearer to the heart of the common man, though Sanskrit had a treasure of knowledge. Shridhar who popularized Marathi poetry and the Purana tradition was no exception to this tradition of defending Marathi against the claims of Sanskrit.

He thus argues in the first chapter of his work *Rāmavijaya*:

> The story composed by the sage Valmiki and heard with great attention by the sages of the subsequent ages, is being related by me in Marathi, the language of the commonalities (Prakrit). Scholars need not have any disregard for this story merely because it is told in the tongue of the common man. Banks of Krishna and Vena are different but the water they carry is the same. The same milk put in different pots does not change its quality. It is just like seeing one object with the help of two eyes which have one perception. Had I related this story in Sanskrit, womenfolk would have been deprived of its contents as they do not understand Sanskrit. For them it would be just like keeping an elephant tied with the stems of lotus.
>
> Why should we throw away a precious stone merely because we could get it in a heap of sand? Will it be wise to reject a kingdom offered without efforts on our part? A garland of pearls added with fragrance should be acceptable without hesitation. Similarly the treasure of Sanskrit literature if made easily available in Marathi should also be acceptable. (tr.)

Moropant (Moropanta, 1729–94). Unlike Shridhar, Moropant is a poet for the highly educated class. Self-conscious artistry, the sentiment of devotion, and attractive narration never came together as they do in the works of Moropant. His greatest contribution to Marathi poetry is the rendering of the entire Mahabharata. As a narrative poet he specialized in dramatic presentation of stories from the Mahabharata. He wrote 108 different versions of the Ramayana, which was only a matter of craftsmanship. He revelled in the use of such tricks and embellishments as rhyme, pun, alliteration and other figures of speech for their own sake. Moropant's poetry can impress only those who have considerable learning, particularly in Sanskrit, and a taste for such writing.

Amritrai (1698–1753). The most active figure of the age. Amritrai has many innovations to his credit. He introduced the Persian metre *Ghazal* and *Masnavi*, the Persian forms of narrative poetry. *Katāva* or *Kaṭibandha* is another of his innovations used in his *Prabandha Kāvyas*. The *Karaka* metre introduced by him was so popular that the ballad singers adopted this metre for their *povadas* (heroic songs). Amritrai has many Hindi and Marathi musical compositions to his credit which have a lovelorn heroine as the central figure. These stimulated the growth of another folk form *lāvaṇi* (erotic songs in the dance-drama style).

Achievements of the Folk Tradition. To complete the picture of the achievements of the age mention should be made of *povadas* (heroic songs or ballads) and *lāvaṇi* which evolved out of the folk tradition and were most popular in this age. The common man could enjoy them as they used the living language. These two are not only the forms of poetry but are closely associated with stagecraft too. Of these, the *lāvaṇi*, with its somewhat bold erotic element, was often linked up with the *tamāśa*, a folk-play, and regarded as an entertainment for the 'lower' class.

Towards the close of the 18th century Marathi literature, like the Maratha rule, showed a downward trend. The advent of British rule in Maharashtra coincided with the decline of some of these traditional forms of Marathi poetry.

A Period of Transition (1800–85)

In 1818 Maharashtra lost its freedom to the British, and in 1885 Keshavsut, the 'Father of Modern Marathi Poetry' published his first poem. The years in between saw a great change come over the scene, in its various areas. In literature the change culminated in the emergence of 'modern' literature, which represented a break with the past. The break was fairly sharp, but it did not occur suddenly. It took decades to come, providing all the while intimations, some of them clear, others rather vague, of what was coming.

In this period of transition, several of the older modes of poetry lingered on. The bhakti mode drew poets like

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Vithoba Anna Daftardar. The *lāvaṇi* had a few adherents, but it had lost its verve and appeal. Translations, adaptations and imitations from Sanskrit appeared off and on. Some of these brought back into circulation classics neglected for centuries, like Kalidasa's *Meghadūta*. That these poems, by and large, had a Sanskritized diction, like that of Moropant, is no wonder.

Navanīta (The Cream), an anthology of Marathi poetry, compiled by Parasurama Tatya Godbole in 1854, has been reprinted more than twenty times indicating its wide appeal. It brought to the common reader a sense of the great variety in the tradition of Marathi poetry; and prepared the ground, as it were, for the acceptance of further variety.

A few translations and adaptations from English deserve special mention. B. R. Pradhan's (1838–86) *Daivasenī* is an adaptation of some parts of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* (1867). The locale of the poem is Rajasthan, in place of Scotland. That it ran into a second edition within ten years, without being first-rate, is an indication of the change in taste. K. R. Kirtikar's (1849–1917) *Indirā* (1884) is an adaptation of Tennyson's *Princess*. Its vigorous championship of the cause of women, rather than its intrinsic poetic merit, brought it success.

Women are toys to men
Like dolls to children
We are certain a time will come
When the path of knowledge will make us free. (tr.)

This is a typical utterance from the poem, and it foreshadows what was to come. V. M. Mahajani's *Kusumāñjalī* (1886) comprises translations of 41 poems of the leading romantic poets in English. Apart from the fact that the translation is competent, the choice of the poems and a flexible metrical expression are pointers to the 'new trend' that was round the corner. Kirtikar too had shown his impatience with some rigidities of metre.

Of the precursors of 'modern' poetry, the following are important. *Vilāpa-laharī* (Waves of Grief, 1882), an elegy on his wife's death by K. R. Kirtikar is genuinely personal. *Gaṅgāvarṇanā* (A Description of the Ganga, 1874) by P. V. Chintamani Pethkar is a realistic description of the Ganga without any moral or spiritual overtones. Its expression too has greater freedom than was allowed by convention; and the poet speaks against rhyme. The most striking departure from convention is to be found in *Rājā Śivājī* (1871) by M. M. Kunte (Kuṇṭe, 1835–88), a long poem built around the heroic figure symbolizing national unity. The English preface to the poem is as important as the poem itself. It expresses the poet's conviction that poetry has to be written in the speech of the common man so that he should feel it is meant for him too, and thus bring the 'classes' together. Kunte's ideas about poetry, and his poem, brought ridicule on him from the conservatives; but they represent a strong protest against a moribund convention. The convention, and most of what it represented, soon became a thing of the past with Kesavasut and others launching 'modern' poetry.

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Oriya

K. C. SAHOO

Traditional Oriya poetry could be broadly divided into four convenient groups—three major and one minor. The three major groups are: (i) the puranas, (ii) the *kāvyas* and (iii) the short poems. The minor group consists of poetry which directly or indirectly incorporates a variety of philosophical discussions. The writers of verse in all these groups were accepted as poets by the people. An interesting phenomenon is that though the philosophical discussions cannot be accepted as pure poetry, the writers of these works, because of their religious outlook, were honoured more in society than the true poets of the time. So, the work of this group, though insignificant as poetry, cannot be overlooked or set aside.

The components of the major groups taken in succession, tell the history of Oriya traditional poetry. In other words, Oriya literature began with the puranas, was followed by the *kāvyas* and then the age of short poems started. Though the categories overlapped somewhat, this was the predominant trend of Oriya poetry between 1450 and 1830.

The Puranas

Sarala Das. The early age of Oriya poetry coincided with the most glorious period of the Orissan history. Kapilendra Deb, the 15th-century monarch of Orissa, conquered vast territories of the southern peninsula up to the Krishna river, and united people of many languages under one administration. As he established a vast kingdom, the stories of his adventures must have been exciting to the people. The introduction of the Oriya language as a literary medium which had, since the 10th century, been used only as an official language, to record royal orders, excited local poets. Sarala Das (Sāraḷa Dās, c. 15th century) the first major poet in the language wrote the great epics the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the *Chaṇḍipurāṇa* in Oriya. His books, except for their Sanskrit names, known characters and ideals, had nothing to do with the originals. The poet questioned most of the established beliefs of the Hindus as well as the authenticity of the puranas. He changed the episodes to suit his own purposes and those of society. Though he was intensely religious, his ideas on religion do not fully tally with the doctrines preached in the Vedas, Upanishads, Smritis and the Hindu Puranas. He was very conscious of the changed circumstances which had arisen out of the preachings of such religions as Buddhism and Jainism and when his episodes are analyzed, it is astonishing to find a strong undercurrent of anti-Hinduism. Though he dedicated his work to the goddess Sarala, the deity of his village, and had shown his devotion to other gods of the Hindu pantheon, his work was entirely secular, dedicated to Man. Thus, Sarala Das' Mahabharata was the richest and the most ambitious writing of his age.

Nothing is known about the life of Sarala Das. It is not known whether he was a cultivator or a soldier or a religious preacher. From his title, Muni, it might be deduced that he led a religious life in a village far from the capital, where he had the opportunity of listening to the puranas, including the Mahabharata, in the temple of Saralachandi, popularly believed to be the goddess of Learning. The heroic deeds of Kapilendra Deb, Sarala Das' knowledge of the Mahabharata and other Hindu puranas, the religious ideas of the people around him, the folk-tales and places in Orissa connected with Yudhisthira and other heroes of the Mahabharata, all combined to shape the episodes of his Mahabharata and create a new epic.

The real significance of Sarala Das' Mahabharata lies not in the stories he chose but in the way he handled them and the richness and fecundity of the language he used. He had an astonishing ability to create new stories out of the old ones. For instance, take the episode of Santanu in the *Ādi parva*. According to the original Sanskrit text, Santanu had two wives, Ganga and Satyavati. From Ganga he had one son, Devavrata by name, who became famous as Bhishma afterwards. After Ganga's departure, Santanu married Satyavati and had two sons by her, Chitrāngada and Vichitravirya. Sarala Das took the names of Santanu, Ganga, Satyavati, Chitrāngada (Citravīrya) and Vichitravīrya from the Sanskrit original and changed the entire story, perhaps to suit the society of his time. Sarala Das' Santanu was not only a king but also a great devotee of Siva. He paid more attention to his religious life than to worldly affairs. Once he dressed himself as Siva and toured the universe on a bull. While returning to his country after a visit to the real Siva at 'Pātāḷa', he came to Nirjhara Desa. Nirghanta, the king of Nirjhara Desa, mistook him for Siva and promised him his daughter Ganga in marriage. Ganga also mistook Santanu for Siva and agreed to the proposal. At the time of the marriage, the real identity of Santanu was detected. But it was too late. This led to an unhappy family life. Santanu in spite of his saintly life became very attached to Ganga, but Ganga was determined to displease him on every occasion. Because of Santanu's amorous character, two sons were born to him from

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paintings. So he named them Chitravirya and Vichitravirya (chitra=picture). Out of fear of Ganga he kept them in Satyavati's care. Ganga also gave birth to seven sons, but killed them all. The eighth one was Bhishma. This time Santanu could not restrain his temper and rebuked Ganga, contemptuously calling her Gangi (a general term of reproach). Ganga was eagerly waiting for an opportune moment to leave Santanu. While leaving, she cursed Santanu stating that he would be killed by the sons of Bhishma. When Bhishma came to know of the curse of his mother, he swore to remain a bachelor. On a previous occasion, Ganga had cursed Santanu's other sons stating they would be issueless. Thus, because of Ganga, the entire family came to ruin, with no hope of a future generation.

When the Oriya version is compared with the Sanskrit, the changes found are: (i) Santanu was dressed as Siva, (ii) Santanu had only one wife, Ganga, and (iii) Chitravirya and Vichitravirya were older than Bhishma.

Sarala Das knew that Ganga was the wife of Siva. Then how could Ganga be married to Santanu, a mortal? In order to reconcile the two ideas, he described Santanu not only as a devotee of Siva but also had him ride a bull in the guise of Siva.

The second difference may be analyzed in the following manner. It is a known fact that Parāśara was in love with Satyavati when she was a virgin and from their union, Vyasa was born. Ordinarily in Oriya society one woman cannot marry twice. In order to justify this point, Sarala Das changed this union to a legal marriage, and so the question of Satyavati's second marriage did not arise at all. Satyavati and Parāśara were family friends of Santanu and took charge of Chitravirya and Vichitravirya. Chitravirya and Vichitravirya are essential characters of the Mahabharata story. It is not possible to write off these characters. So Sarala Das had them begotten from pictures. There are sufficient instances of such births in the puranas. Ahalya, Sita, Radha, all were *ayonijas*, that is, they were not born of a woman's womb. By this change Chitravirya and Vichitravirya were born earlier than Bhishma. Thus, when they died, it was not a problem for Satyavati to approach their younger brother, Bhishma, to beget a son from the widows of Chitravirya and Vichitravirya. This was in accordance with the provisions of the *Smṛtiśāstras* and was acceptable in Oriya society. By this change Satyavati remained a well-wisher and friend of Santanu's family. She was not the mother-in-law of the widows left by Chitravirya and Vichitravirya, and so there was no harm in her advising the widows to meet Bhishma secretly to beget sons.

Sarala Das not only changed the stories to make the Mahabharata suit his society, but also introduced a number of situations to explain the episodes in a new manner. For instance, though Santanu was dressed in Siva's garb, he was not a real mendicant. After his marriage to Ganga, his real nature was revealed. It was found that he was an amorous man. Taking advantage of his weakness, Ganga threw away all his mendicant's clothes and compelled him to forego his fasts for Vishnu and other gods. Ganga also advised him to discharge his duties as a king, stating that as master of a kingdom, it was not proper to lead a mendicant's life. This aspect of Sarala Das' poetry may be seen in the other characters and episodes of his Mahabharata as well.

In Santanu we come across another important aspect of Sarala Das' poetry. According to him, the human race is always under the influence of the love-god. Nobody, not even the gods or saints, or kings, can escape from the influence of the love-god. He can create miracles and do and undo all things in the universe. Though the love-god is an essential element in creation, it sometimes takes man along a wrong path. Therefore people must be very careful of this god.

As he was mainly a story-teller, Sarala Das chose a metre known as *Dāṇḍi*, a type of free verse, to narrate his stories. It was spontaneous, instinctive and most suitable for story-telling. He mainly used colloquial and idiomatic Oriya words. His use of Sanskrit and Apabhramsa words was rare and when he did use them, they lost their original character. Sarala Das was undoubtedly one of the greatest Oriya writers. The vastness of his work, the range of his ideas and the manner in which he used story, metre, words and imagination are all indicative of his greatness.

Balarama Das. The next best writer of Oriya puranas was Balarama Das (Balarāma Dās). He is believed to have been born in 1467 in a noble family of Orissa. His father, Somanatha Mahapatra, was a minister to the king. His respectable background presupposed a career at court, but, to the astonishment of all, he renounced everything to become a Vaishnava. This act of Balarama's irritated many persons at Puri and they complained to the king from time to time. Balarama faced this opposition bravely with the grace of Lord Jagannatha. In later life he came into contact with Sri Chaitanya. It is also said that he was fortunate to have four friends: Jagannātha Dās, Achyuta Das, Yoshobanta Das and Sisu Ananta Das. All four were important persons of the age and had many followers. The people called them the 'Panchasakhas' (Five Friends). Balarama and Jagannatha Das were famous for their devotion to Lord Jagannatha. Devakinandana, a Vaishnava of the latter half of the 16th century, honoured Balarama Das in his *Vaiṣṇava Vandanā* as a great devotee of Lord Jagannatha. The couplet runs as follows:

Bande uḍiyā Balarāma Dāsa Mahāśaya
Jagannātha Balarāma jāra basa hay

(I respect the Great Balarama Das, an Oriya who can even influence Lord Jagannatha and Balabhadra.)

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In spite of his good qualities as a Vaishnava, it is said that he had some connections with a prostitute. According to *Dīptisāra Gītā*, said to have been written by the poet himself, the name of this prostitute was Charu.

Balarama was more intellectual than Sarala Das. He was well versed in Sanskrit and had translated the *Srimad-bhagavad Gita*, as well as two chapters of the Sanskrit Bhagavata into idiomatic Oriya. His translation of these two works show his thorough knowledge of Sanskrit. He also composed a number of short poems. His philosophical discussions were of a very high order. Two prose works, *Brahma Gita* and *Parache Chuḍāmaṇi*, explained the technical terms of the *kāyāyoga*. Though he wrote works of various types for different sections of society, his Ramayana is the best of all his works.

Story-telling is one of the most powerful elements in a purana. Both Sarala Das and Balarama Das wanted to please their audience by the freshness of their stories. But the manner in which they narrated the stories was different. Balarama Das lacks Sarala Das' directness. The difference has something to do with their surroundings. Sarala Das lived 65 kilometres from Cuttack and about a hundred kilometres from Puri, the two former capitals of Orissa, whereas Balarama Das stayed mostly in Puri. The audiences of Sarala Das were rustics, whereas Balarama aimed at the elite population of Puri, who had some knowledge of the puranas and *kāvyas* of Sanskrit literature. Because of his audience, Balarama introduced various types of descriptions, namely, the description of a woman's beauty, a boat, journey, forests full of flowers, different types of dresses and ornaments and many others. Because of these long descriptions, the readers or listeners of his purana had to wait for the next event in the story. The introduction of this new element by Balarama Das makes his purana closer to *kāvya*. There is a freshness in all Balarama Das' works not found in the professional approach of Sarala Das.

Balarama's fresh approach led to his including stories from other puranas, *kāvyas* and *nāṭakas* in his works. He did not change the original story like Sarala Das, but within the Valmiki framework he introduced new material from other puranas. The story of Ahalya, analyzed below, will help make this point clear.

The poets of Oriya literature describe Ahalya as the daughter of Brahma. Balarama Das says that Brahma once made a careful study of the beauty and qualities of all women. He then gathered the best of the most beautiful limbs and out of them created a girl par excellence and named her Ahalya. Brahma, according to the Valmiki Ramayana, took the most beautiful limbs of all living beings, whereas, according to Balarama Das, He assembled those of the women only.

Describing the marriage of Ahalya, Balarama Das says that all the gods, demons and men who were present at the time of Ahalya's creation, wanted to marry her. Brahma knew their minds, so he arranged for a test. They were all asked to race round the universe and the winner could marry the girl. Indra and the other contestants started off immediately, but Gautama sat in silence till Brahma asked him to try his luck. Gautama accepted the command and, returning in a short while after circumambulating *Surabhi*, the divine cow, three times, claimed Ahalya. His argument was that circumambulating *Surabhi* was equal to the circumambulating of the universe. Brahma was convinced by this argument, and gave Ahalya to Gautama in marriage. While the marriage ceremony was being performed, Indra returned after circumambulating the universe. The Ramayana of Valmiki refers to the marriage of Ahalya, but it does not mention any test in this connection. Balarama Das' source can be traced to the *Brahma Purāṇa* (ch. 87) and the *Ananda Rāmāyaṇa* (1, 3, 18).

The first approach of Indra in his own form is not found in the Ramayana of Valmiki. Balarama Das most probably took it from the *Brahma Vaivarṭta Purāṇa* (Krishna Janma Khand, ch. 47). The disguise of Indra as Gautama, however, is found in the Ramayana of Valmiki. The only difference between Valmiki and Balarama Das on this question is that while Valmiki's Ahalya recognizes Indra, Das' takes him to be Gautama.

Valmiki is silent about the 'Marjara' form of Indra. Introducing this new element in his Ramayana, Balarama Das has shown his acquaintance with sources other than Valmiki. Similarly, while Valmiki refers to one of the curses on Indra by Gautama, namely, the loss of manliness, the curse of the *Sahasrayonīs* (thousand female genital organs), which is found in the Ramayana of Balarama Das, is most probably taken either from the *Brahma Purāṇa* (7, 59) or the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

Like Sarala Das, Balarama Das was also critical of the existing religious customs of Orissa. He was inimical to the greedy Brahmins, the pretentious sages and the so-called pandits of this country. On the other hand, influenced by Vaishnavism, he praised such personages as Bibhishana, Sugriva and Hanuman for being real devotees of God, which they demonstrated by helping Sri Rama. Balarama, in his Ramayana, gave much importance to the recitation of the name of Rama and Jagannatha. Though he was an ardent worshipper of Jagannatha, he saw no difference between Rama and Jagannatha. Accordingly he identifies most of the important festivals of Sri Jagannatha with important events of Rama's life, such as Rama's return journey from Lanka, his entry into Ayodhya and his eternal sleep in Heaven, i.e. the car festival, the Bahuda festival, the *Hari Śayana Ekādaśi*.

The Jagamohan Ramayana, because of its poetic merit and religious outlook, has remained popular for the last four hundred years. It is the perennial source of the Rama Katha in Oriya literature, later poets using it as their main

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source for the Rama-Katha. Yet its author's position remains unchallenged till now.

Jagannatha Das. The third great poet to write Puranas was Jagannatha Das, another major literary figure of 16th-century Orissa. Born to a pundit family of Kapileswarapur, in Puri district, he was well versed in the Sanskrit language. Because of this background he could not adopt a style similar to that of Sarala Das or Balarama Das. As mentioned earlier, he was one of the 'Panchasakhās' and a friend of Sri Chaitanya who conferred on him the title 'Atibaḍi' (very great).

Instead of writing *Gītas* and *Samhitas* like his four great contemporaries and friends, he wrote a number of *stutis* (songs of devotion). He gave more importance to the *bhakti* cult than to the *gyāna bhakti* cult. In order to fulfil his aim, he translated the *Bhāgabata Purāṇa*, the most celebrated scripture of the Vaishnavas, into Oriya. Unlike his predecessors, he made a faithful translation of the work, retaining most of the Sanskrit words. The nine-syllable metre used by him fitted the Sanskrit text very well. In most cases, he divided the Sanskrit line into just two Oriya *padas* (steps). Because of the growing popularity of Vaishnavism in the country, this work of his became tremendously popular among the masses, and separate halls, known as *Bhāgabata Gharas*, were constructed for its presentation and recitation. The recitation of this work became routine in every household in Orissa.

Achyuta of Nemala, a village in Cuttack district, was another important poet of the age. He wrote the *Haribanśa Purāṇa* to spread the popularity of the *bhakti* cult. He knew no Sanskrit and so imitated the style and diction of Sarala and Balarama Das. He wrote the Purana in a simple style with the intention of popularizing stories prevalent in the local society rather than the authentic *Bhāgabata Purāṇa* or Sanskrit *Haribanśa*. In his presentation of the theme, he was influenced by poets like Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandi Das. His work, though popular among the masses, was recited only once a year, the *Pārāyaṇa* (recitation of *Haribanśa*) continuing for seven days. The poet has given in his work a picture of the contemporary social life of Orissa while describing the legends of Sri Krishna.

The popularity of this form of writing traditional poetry continued even into the modern age. Some of the poets who became famous as the writers of puranas in Oriya literature are: Haladhara Das (17th century), Gopala Telenga (18th century), Suryamani Chyaupattanayak (19th century), the translators of *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa;* Nilambar Das (17th century) the author of *Jaimini Bhārata;* Mahadeva Das (18th century), the author of *Viṣṇukeśari Purāṇa*, *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* and other puranas; Pitambar Das (18th century), the author of *Nrusingha Purāṇa*; Krishna Singh (19th century), the writer of the Mahabharata; and Dinabandhu Khāḍangā (18th century), the author of *Bhāgabata*.

The Kāvyas

The *kāvya* form of traditional poetry is a little younger than the purana form. Narasingh Sena, the author of *Parimalā* and *Gopakeli*, and Arjuna Das, the author of *Rāmabibhā*, were famous for their *kāvyas* during the early part of the 16th century. At least three poets, Dharanidhar, Brundabana Das and Trilochana Das, translated the famous *Gita Gobinda* into Oriya and helped to popularize the *kāvya* form.

From the very start, the *kāvya* form adopted three separate lines. The first was based on imaginative plots, whereas the second and the third took their themes either from Krishna Katha or from Kama Katha. The first developed into an amorous type of poetry, whereas the other two became devotional in their outlook.

The *kāvya* form of poetry appeared mainly in the *prabandha* forms, though other forms, known as *padiās*, *pois*, *bolies*, *līlas* and *campus*, were also popular among the poets. These, though they seemed different in form and name, were really small *kāvyas*. Vishnu Das (*Premalocanā*, *Kalābati*, *Bada Sakuntalā*) and Raghunatha Harichandana (*Līlāvati*) of the 16th century, Pratap Ray (*Sasisenā*) and Banamali Das (*Chāta Ichābati*) of the 17th century, Padmanabha Sri Chandan (*Sasi Rekhā*) and Lokanatha Vidyadhar (*Sarbāṅga Sundari*) of the 18th century were famous for their imaginative, amorous plots. Arjun Das (*Rāmabibhā*) of the 16th century, Dhananjay Bhanja (*Sri Rāma* or *Raghunātha Vilās*) of the 17th century, Māguni Pattanaik (*Rāma Candra Bihār*), Baisya Sadasiva (*Rāmalīla*), Viswanatha Khuntia (*Bicitra Rāmāyaṇa*) and Ananga Narendra (*Rāmalīla*) of the 18th century took Rama-Katha as the plot of their *kāvyas*, Debadurlabha Das (*Rahasya Mañjari*) of the 16th century, Brundabati Dasi (*Pūrṇatama candrodaya*) and Kartik Das (*Rukminibibhā*) of the 17th century, and Dinakrushna Das (*Rasakallola*), Abhimanyu Sāmanta Sinhara (*Bidagdha Cintāmaṇi*), Kabisurya Baladeva Rath (*Kiṣora Candrānanda Campu*) and Bhakta Charan Das (*Mathurā Maṅgala*) of the 18th century were famous for their Krishna *kāvyas*.

Upendra Bhanja was the most talented poet of the 18th century. He adopted all the three themes and became very famous as a poet of *Rāma-kathā*. Because of his extraordinary talent he was popularly known as *Kabi Samrāt* (The Poet-Emperor). A critical evaluation of his poetry will reveal the characteristics of the age, known as *Riti Yuga*.

Upendra, who was born about 1670 into the royal family of Ghumsar in Ganjām, a southern district of Orissa, was the grandson of Dhananjaya Bhanja, another great poet. Though he always called himself *Viravara*, he was never a king; he was a master of words. From *Gītābhidhāna*, it is

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learnt that he was well versed in seven dictionaries. He has written a large number of books including three works on rhetoric and one dictionary. Most of his works are still unpublished. His works can be divided into five categories: (i) *Gītikā*, (ii) *Paurāṇik kāvya*, (iii) *Kalpanika kāvya*, (iv) *Ālankārika kāvya* and (v) *Vibidha Racanā*.

He was a great devotee of God Raghunatha. It is said that he was blessed by the God Himself through *Rāma Taraka Mantra*. Only four of his Rama Kavyas have come to light. They are *Baideshisa Vilāsa*, *Rāma Līlāmrita*, *Sola Caupadi* and *Abanā Rasa Taraṅga*. He has also interwoven the Rama story in almost all his other works. His romances, such as *Lāvaṇyavati*, *Koti Brahmāṇḍa Sundari*, and others, have been modelled on the Ramayana.

Upendra Bhanja is a controversial poet in Oriya literature. His admirers place him on par with Kalidas, whereas others criticize him for his fascination for playing on words and for his amorous descriptions. But it is because of his jugglery with words, his alliteration and his double entendre that he is considered one of the most popular poets of Orissa. Another reason for the tremendous popularity of his work lies in the music of his poems which are sung by professional singers and the common people. When the professional singers sing his poems and explain the different meanings of the words, the audience is wonderstruck at the poet's scholarship.

Upendra Bhanja's own remarks about his work are contained in the *Rasikahārābali* and the *Lāvaṇyabati*. In the *Rasikahārābali* he says that the work will be in verse, *Sṛngāra* its dominant *rasa* and that he will express sentiments born of his personal experiences. In *Lāvaṇyabati* he says that he sings a sweet song (*mṛdu gīt*) to express his emotions pictorially, which is why the work is full of poetic embellishments. He says good poetry should consist of words composed of simple sounds agreeable to the ear and whose meaning should arouse pleasure. His poetry, he says, is pleasing in sound and capable of giving pleasure to the heart. Though he says nothing about the dominant sentiment (*rasa*) of the *Lāvaṇyabati*, it depicts *sṛngāra*; in fact, all the works of Upendra Bhanja are Sṛngaric in spirit.

The musical element in Upendra Bhanja's work is part of its very nature. It is, on the one hand, born of the excessive use of alliteration and, on the other, of the adoption of the traditional *rāgas* and *rāginis* of Indian music, viz. *basant*, *pāhāṛiā*, *kedār*, etc. He obviously had a trained ear for musical sounds and this helped him a great deal in the choice of words, but this does not lend a lyrical character to his work. Lyric is a subjective kind of poetry, whereas Upendra Bhanja's works can best be classified as songs.

It is difficult to translate Upendra Bhanja's poetry. This is primarily because of his ornate style and repetitive use of the same words with variations in meaning. His poetry also incorporated a large variety of typical musical patterns of Orissa and it is difficult to render this musicality into English. He was, indeed, a great master of the language and has few equals in the use of figures of speech in great abundance and exuberance. Late Bichhanda Charan Patnaik has translated some of Upendra Bhanja's writings into English. The following three extracts would give an idea of the beauty inherent in his poetry:

The fish of my heart was in the tank of my bosom
Thou didst tempt it with the bait of love,
Caught it with the angling rod of thy glance
And kept it in the jar of thy breasts.
O thou beauteous one
My eyes were made captive and lodged in the prison-house of thy charming face.
The felicity of my heart and eyes in their imprisoned state
Are such as even minstrels cannot sing.

(from *Lābaṇyabati*)

A rare piece of fortune is it
That she the adept in love-frolics,
That overflowing river of love,
That disturber of the Yogic staidness of Lord Siva
With an eyebrow which is verily the bow of the god of love
And with a person as soft as the *śirīṣ* flower
Is the treasure of my life.

(from *Rasikahārābali*)

The gloom of sorrows doth envelop my mind
And can be dispelled by a sight of her face alone.
The sea of sorrow can I cross
Only by the help of the canoe of her lap,
No other way is open to me.
Like the sons of king *Sāgar*
I am being burnt down with torture great,
And her pearl necklace like the river Ganges
Could quench the fire
May she send it one to me, O bee, sayeth Upendra the valiant.

(from *Premasudhānidhi*)

Dinakrushna, another poet of the period, is famous for his *Rasa Kallola* (*The Wave of Bliss*). In this *kāvya*, he describes the Gopa and Mathura Lila of Sri Krishna. There was nothing new in the theme, but his simple, sweet and melodious words moved the people so much that they considered him one of the best poets of the period. The next generation of poets, such as Sadananda Kavisurya Brahma and Abhimanyu, were largely followers of Upendra and Dinakrushna. In the *kāvyas* of Abhimanyu and Sadananda one sees the teachings and philosophy of Vaishnava thought rather than the human feelings of Radha and Krishna. The matter as well as the form of these works is limited and stereotyped, with very little scope for the poet's individuality and imagination.

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Lyrical Kāvyas

The third category of traditional poetry is made up of the short poems or lyrical *kāvyas*. The poets who wrote them used several different verse-forms. There were no conventions nor did they create new forms. Some of the poems had no names, whereas others were known as *cautiśās*, *koilis* and *caupadis*, *bhajans*, *jaṇāṇas* or *stutis*.

The *cautiśās* are divided into 34 stanzas, or *padas*, each *pada* beginning with one syllable of the consonants. There are three types of *cautiśās* to be found in Oriya literature. The simple ones are those that begin from *ka* and end in *kṣa*. The *Uḷata cautiśās* begin from *kṣa* and end in *ka*. The third type is known as the *Meṣayudha cautiśā* and in it the last verse begins from *ka* and the second verse begins from *kṣa*, continuing thus to the end. This form of poetry was very popular among the great poets of Oriya literature, most of them trying their hand at it. There are thousands of poems written by them that are still unpublished. In the 18th century, because of the influence of music, *cautiśās* like 'Tṛaya Rāga Tripura Sundari Cautiśā' by Gokula Narendra and 'Sapta Rāga cautiśā' by Khetribara Bhanja were written.

The *cautiśās* may be divided into these seven groups: (i) *Vairāgya O Bhaktimūlaka cautiśā* (devotional), (ii) *Tatwātmak cautiśā* (conceptual), (iii) *Kathā cautiśā* (story), (iv) *Chitāu cautiśā* (letters), (v) *Khedātmaka cautiśā* (melancholic), (vi) *Alaṅkāra cautiśā* (poetics) and (vii) others.

The most famous *cautiśās* in Oriya poetry are: *Kalasā cautiśā* by Bachhā Dās (15th century), *Kamala loçana* by Balarama Das (16th century), *Rasa Kulyā* by Damodar Das (16th century), *Mālyabanta cautiśā* by Vishnu Das (16th century), *Cokhi cautiśā* by Vishnu Das (16th century), *Srikruṣṇānka Pāthapaḍhā cautiśā* by Hari Das (17th century), *Snāna Smarana Pāthapaḍha* by Dinakrushna Das (18th century), *Ārttatrāṇa Jaṇāṇa*, *Gundichā Bhābanā*, *Kaligamana* by Dinakrushna Das (18th century), *Gaṇeśa Agre Pujā* by Dibakar, *Kalākalebara*, *Manabodha* by Bhakta Das (18th century), *Bā* by Bipra Kapila (18th century), *Udhaba cautiśā* by Bhupati and Dinakrushna (18th century), *Hansadūta cautiśā* by Sayamaghana (18th century), *Hansadūta cautiśā* by Sisu Yadu Das (18th century).

The *koili* is another form of the *cautiśā*. The only difference in this type of poetry is that one sends his message to another through a cuckoo. The famous writers of *koilis* are Mārkaṇḍa Dās (15th century), Balarama Das (16th century), Jagannatha Das (16th century), Sankara Das (17th century), Trilochana Das (18th century) and Lokanātha Das (18th century). Twenty-one *koilis* have been collected and published by the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Orissa (1973).

Like *cautiśās* and *koilis*, there is another form of poetry known as *soḍasās*. In this form the vowels are used in succession. In all these forms, the initial word of each line adds stress to the meaning of the poem.

The *caupadis* are so called because they consist of four *padas*. But this rule does not apply to all *caupadis*. There are *caupadis* which consist of eight to ten *padas*. (J. B. Mohanty has collected and published a number of such poems written by 103 poets: *Oriya Gītikāvya Samkalana*, 1977.)

In the early period of Oriya history the *bhajanas* and *jaṇāṇas* were written in the *caupadi* form. In the 18th century, the *caupadis* became the popular form of the *sangitās* and expressed the amorous feelings of lovers. Both kings and commoners appreciated this form of poetry.

Vaishnava lyrics form an important part of the short poems. Sri Chaitanya's long stay at Puri inspired some of his 16th-century followers, such as Ramananda Ray, Madhabi Dasi, Balarama Das and Raghu Arakhit, to write lyrics. They were influenced by poets like Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Chandi Das. Preachers like Shyāmānanda and Rasikānanda gave a new impetus to Vaishnava philosophy in Orissa. The poems of Murāri Das, Gobinda Das and Narottama Das of Bengal and the songs of Tulasi Das, Sur Das and Mirabai of North India became very popular in Orissa. All of them influenced such Vaishnava poets as Rasananda Nabaghana Chand, Salbeg, Fakir Bhanja, Dasapalla Yubaraja in the 17th century and Narasingha Pattanāyak, Kabichandra Narahari and others in the 18th century. All these poets came under the spell of *Riti* poets like Upendra Bhanja and Lokanatha Vidyadhar. Their poems, as a consequence, were amorous rather than devotional in character. In the latter part of the 18th century and early 19th century, there was, however, a group of Vaishnava poets who wrote devotional poems. This group comprised Gopalkrushna, Banamali, Gaura Charan and Benudhara, the most successful of whom was Gopal Krushna of Southern Orissa, a follower of Shyamananda. The sentiments evoked by his songs were a combination of the feelings of a typical Oriya lover (or beloved) and pure devotion. His songs were a refreshing contrast to the time-worn, colourless, stereotyped artificiality of narrative poetry. The simple and appealing melody associated with his songs heralded a new era in Oriya poetry.

Banamali Das. The next poet of importance is Banamali Das. He originally wrote erotic love-poems, but after his conversion to the Vaishnava faith, he composed hundreds of devotional lyrical songs in praise of Lord Krishna and Jagannatha. His simple and melodious songs are still popular among the masses.

Kavisurya Baladeva Rath (1789–1845) was another composer, singer and poet who is well known for his *Kiṣoracandrānana Campū* a slender collection of 34 songs. These songs are arranged alphabetically, each stanza starting with one of the consonants in the Oriya alphabet

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beginning from *Ka* to *Kṣa*. Together the songs beautifully delineate the erotic love-play and dalliance between Radha and Krishna.

Of all the composers on Radha-Krishna theme Gopalkrushna, Banamali and Kavisurya Baladeva are by far the most well-known and popular. The following poem from the composition of Kavisurya Baladeva reveals his sensitivity and his ability to bring out subtle nuances of emotion:

Oh thou ocean of mercy and forgiveness.
Who art in perpetual embrace with the full-bossomed charms of Lakshmi,
Oh redeemer of the worlds,
Whose feet are the very jewels of all the Vedas,
And whose blessed servant is no other than the great Brahma himself,
And the effulgence of whose toe-nails are cherished even by the gods,
As the embellishment of their foreheads,
Shall I, oh Lord, miss thy mercy,
Even though seldom do I utter thy name in spite of being
The first among sinners?
Let thy compassionate look alone destroy all my sins,
Oh redeemer of the fallen,
And even though my sins deserve no pardon,
Should I be thrown into eternal suffering of hell, with such an omnipotent master as thee?
Oh thou destroyer of sins of all the beings,
And delighter of the hearts of the pious,
Tired as I am, with the incessant running after the illusions of the world,
Pray, relieve me of these vexations
And let this fact of thy grace,
Get proclaimed from this earth below,
To all the solar planes up above.

(from *Kiṣoracandrānana Campū*—the *Kṣa* song
tr. M. Mansinha)

Gopalkrushna's and Banamali's lyrics have been used in Odisi dance items. They are extremely lyrical in original Oriya. Given below are a song each by Gopal Krushna and Banamali in translation.

I. All-forgiving Love
(A lady-friend to Radha)

Why any more consideration for him, darling?
Why can't you say a decisive 'no' to that hopeless philanderer?
Should you still cling to his love,
even after being made
To shed rivers of tears for him! (Refrain)
Which woman should permit herself to be victimised by the promises of so dishonourable a man,
Not one particle of whose personality, from top to toe, breathes any truth anywhere?
Lapses, once in a while, somewhere and sometime, are not amiss,
But here is a fellow who breaks his words twenty times a day!
He, whose honour you have so long protected
By hiding all his lapses from your closest friends,
Has scandalised you before the whole world, Having himself enticed you to the forest-trysts!
Does not the bee, even after enjoying the charms of the lotus, run to the wild jasmine?
Can an elephant be prevented from enjoying a toilet of dust, even after hundred baths?
You may, my gazelle-eyed darling, rather carry the fire of separation eternally in your soul,
Than desire for the happiness of consummation with him any more.

But says Gopalkrushna:

The enchanter was at the doorstep again!
And Radha stopped her friend's mouth with her cloth
Not to hear any more against her faithless dearest!

Gopalkrushna
(tr. M. Mansinha)

II. Radha to a lady-friend

I am now like the pincers of the blacksmith, my darling
Now in water and now in fire again,
He, delighting in both!
People hope for great happiness out of love;
But how is it, darling, I am so miserable, for it?
There is no satiation for me,
However long I see him.
And my eyes nearly burst,
If he just goes out of my sight,
I know not why also, the more you defame him,
The gladder it makes my heart,
While sinks the moment you start praising him,
But when we meet, these eyes, darling,
remain glued to his presence,
A year-long vision appears but a fleeting moment,
While a moment's non-seeing seems like endless ages
Says Banamali, 'where indeed is the happiness in life
Am I not dying each moment,
Thinking and thinking of him only!'

Banamali
(tr. M. Mansinha)

Some of Upendra Bhanja's and Dinakrushna's lyrics on eternal lovers Radha and Krishna portray beautifully

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anguish and ecstasy of their love. Examples from both the poets are given below:

I

Whose hand shall I hold, O friend,
Now that my love of loves has left,
'Tis certain I shall pine and die.

You are mine and I am yours,
Never let me part,
Your five arrows of love do scorch
My body with all-consuming fire.

O that exquisite forehead of yours,
The fan now lying useless;
How is it that we meet no longer.
On our ivory bed!

O clever one, your words captivate
Like the *kokila*'s melodious call,
The curves of your eyebrows
Put the rainbow's beauty to shame.

At such a lovely jewel,
When I gaze at the grace of your face,
Whatever crimes I have committed,
Do never take them to heart.

Says the poet Upendra Bhanja:
This amorous maiden longs for him,
To sit on her fair lover's lap,
When their four eyes shall meet.

Upendra Bhanja
(tr. Jayanta Mahapatra)

II

O *kokila*, how sensuous is your call!
Your singing torments Radhika's heart.

O *kokila*, fly, fly away,
Carrying this message to distant Mathura,
On meeting Sri Krushna,
Our distress do convey,
That he may come and see us here.

O *kokila*, how short a while
Our cowherd lord made love to us,
This all-fulfilling jewel
Now with worry fills our days,
Himself in contentment stays,
To whom shall we relate our grief, dear.

O *kokila*, from the day he left for Mathura.
The river Jamuna is dead,
Dead the *kadamba* tree,
The dark-skinned charmer is dead for us, dear!

So says the poet Dinakrushna
In worship to the lotus-footed one:
Useless is our youth,
To whom shall we relate our agony, dear.

Dinakrushna
(tr. Jayanta Mahapatra)

After the Muslim invasion, Orissa was divided into a number of small states. The court of the Gajapati kings of Orissa lost its importance and the poets and pandits of Orissa, instead of gathering at the court of the king of Puri (later the nominal king of Khurda) took shelter in the semi-independent states like Ghumsar, Dasapalla, Banki, Athagarh, Banapur, Nayagarh and others. By the middle of the 18th century, the rulers of a number of these small states became not only patrons of poets but also wanted to take upon themselves the fame of those they sponsored. As a result, the literary tradition was encouraged mainly by the rulers of these semi-independent states. Though some of these rulers were influenced by the great Vaishnava preachers like Shyamananda, almost all of them led sybaritic lives. Naturally, most of the poets of these courts wrote thousands of erotic poems.

Though this trend in literature continued up to the last years of the 19th century, the love-lyrics written by these poets were almost mechanical repetitions of love poems written by Upendra Bhanja. The most noticeable thing in these love-lyrics was the expression of the same passions, such as the agonies of a lover in different seasons of the year, the sweet words of a lover to his beloved, the erotic and mechanical description of the beautiful limbs of a young girl. Among these poets the most noteworthy were Dinabandhu Harichandan and Narasingh Pattanaik.

Fourth Category

The fourth category of Oriya traditional poetry consisted of the *gitās, samhitās, paṭalas*, etc. In this type of work, the poet's main aim is to explain a difficult principle of *yoga* or *bhakti*. Though these works were written in poetry-form, they have very little or no poetic merit. But as their language is generally simple they are still popular among the masses.

Generally speaking, the poets of *Gyāna Mārg* (Path of Knowledge) prefer this sort of poetry. In their works they discuss the methods of their meditation. Firstly, they try to interpret the popular 'mantras' like *Mahāmantra, Gāyatri, Sāvitri* and *Gopāla Mantra*, including the *Bīja Mantra*. Secondly, they give importance to efficient concentration of the mind to which end they describe the methods of *Kāya*

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yoga and *Śatacakra Sādhanā*. Thirdly, they describe the glory of *Guru Sevā* and *Nāma Smaraṇa* (remembering the Name, the Word). Fourthly, they lay stress on the seeing of the god inside oneself, which is designated *Piṇḍa Bramhāṇḍa* (the Body Universe). Poets like Balarama Das, Jagannatha Das, Bira Sinha, Bhupati, Achyuta Das, Yashobanta Das and Sisu Ananta Das of the 16th century, Dwaraka Das, Debananda Das, Nanda Das and Chaitanya Das of the 17th century, and Dinakrushna of the 18th century were famous for this type of poetry. They adopted an explanatory method to write the *gitās* and *samhitās*, but when composing small poems like *bhajanas*, they showed their poetic merit in a wonderful way. Poems like 'Bhulamana, bhula Kanhiki' (Oh forgetful mind, why are you forgetting?) and 'Kahai mana are mo bola kara' (The mind says, obey my words) are not only famous for their literary merit but also for their mysticism.

Poets like Salbeg (17th century) and Banamali and Dinakrushna (18th century) were famous for their devotional *bhajanas*. These *bhajan* writers attached greater importance to the name of God than to God Himself or considered God as the only master of the universe. In one of his poems, Dinakrushna says, 'Nahi nahi Jagabandhu bina mora Santa' (There is no other master of mine than Jagabandu). In this poem he also says that it is God alone who knows the incidents happening in the 14 worlds and can save devotees in distress. The king Bali, Bibhishana, Draupadi and the bird Bharathia are all protected by God. In other poems of this type, poets add the names of Ajāmila, Dhruba, Prahlād and the elephant king who were protected by God in their distress. Such *bhajanas* were not only popular among Oriya poets but similar ideas were also expressed in the songs of Tulasidas (Hindi) and Purandar Das (Kannada).

Towards the end of the 19th century, Bhima Bhoi (1855–95) became very famous as a writer of devotional songs. He was *Kandha* (a tribal) by caste and blind. He started a new sect, the *Mahimā dharma*. Perhaps because of his origins and his blindness, his songs represented the feelings of the majority in society. Instead of expressing the amorous feelings of Radha and Krishna, which was a popular theme with the Vaishnava poets, he devoted himself to singing the glory of Almighty God. In one of his songs he says:

> Prāṇinka ārta dukha apramita
> dekhu dekhu kebā sahu
> mojibana pachhe narke paḍithāu
> jagata uddhāra heu.

> Endless are the miseries of human beings
> Who can tolerate seeing all these
> Let my life be condemned to hell for ever
> And let the universe be redeemed. (tr.)

In another poem he says that God Himself is suffering in the summer and rainy seasons. He has no place to take shelter, but in spite of His own sufferings, He protects the world from sorrows. The blind poet's simple and melodious songs touched the heart rather than the mind of the people and became very popular in no time.

Conclusion

All traditional poetry, except the *Kālpanika kāvyas* and *kabitas*, was religious in character. Devotion to one God or to several gods may be seen in this poetry from beginning to end. In the early period of Oriya literature, the influence of Buddhism, in its different forms, was prominent. The poets, like the Buddhist preachers, criticized the existing Hindu ideas and customs, such as the dress of men, fasting prevalent in the society, the arrogance of Sanskrit learning and the pride of the pandits and mendicants. They put much stress on controlling the mind and the senses through fervent love of God. But after the popularity of Vaishnavism increased, these poets preached the doctrine of *prema bhakti*, rather than *bhāba-bhakti*. Accordingly the theme of Radha-Krishna became very popular with them.

After the Muslim invasion there was a definite change in the ideals of the poets. The Sanskrit texts were no longer able to retain their authority over the minds of the poets. The ideals of Muslim love poetry preached by the Sufi poets penetrated unconsciously into the minds of these poets and so, in place of experiencing ecstatic bliss in God they yearned for wordly pleasure from women. They claimed that the pleasure arising out of union with a beautiful woman is superior to *mukti* (or liberation) obtained from gods, the heavenly pleasure such as *Indra Sukha*, is inferior to worldly pleasure with women. They nourished the idea that *vaikuṇṭha* itself had descended on earth through the limbs of the women. The poets of this period, therefore, described the different beautiful limbs of such women as 'Lāvaṇyakoṭibramhāṇḍa 'Sundari', 'Prema-Sudhānidhi' and 'Rasa Harabali' in place of the unique form of Krishna or Rama. Even the Vaishnava poets of the period, though describing the Krishna or Rama theme, were more sensual than devotional.

Padavali literature was an exception to such poetry. Poets such as Gopala Krushna, Banamali, Benudhar and others revived the Vaishnava ideals and wrote poetry expressing a sincere love of God. This period coincided with the Marhatta invasion of Orissa. The Marhattas in Orissa were plunderers and not real rulers, but their Hinduism perhaps inspired these poets to go back to the ideals of such *padavali* writers as Chandi Das (Bengali), Vidyapati (Maithili), Surdas (Hindi) and Rasananda and Sa[illegible] (Oriya). Instead of writing on the Radha-Krishna love story in an erotic and amorous way, they gave stress to the devotional element in the relationship. Finally, it can

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said that the traditional Oriya poets, but for some exceptions, surrendered themselves entirely to God.

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Punjabi

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Introduction

Punjabi poetry, as available to us now, dates back to the beginning of the 13th century, when Bābā Farīd (Farid Shakarganj, 1173–1265) composed his *śloks* (*ślokas*—couplets) and hymns. Though he was a Muslim mystic, belonging to the Chishti order of the Sufis, he fell in line with the Indian literary tradition, while writing in an Indian vernacular. He composed *śloks* and *padās*, which had been in use in Prakrit and Apabhramsa literatures. The tradition of writing *śloks* and *padās* continued throughout the Middle Age till the 18th century. Guru Nanak period in Punjabi literature was a period of Renaissance. It was, in fact, a golden age, when there was an Upanishadic revival in the emotional outbursts of the radical medieval Indian saints. Old forms of poetry and metrical patterns abound in the literature of this age, a notable example of which is the *Ādi Granth*, the great Sikh anthology compiled by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev in 1604. With the establishment of the Muslim empire in northern India, impact of the Persian literary tradition on Punjabi literature was considerable. Various poetic genres and themes, prevalent in Persian literature, gained popularity in Punjabi. Traditional religious literature continued to be composed for both the Hindus and the Muslims. Whereas Rama Kāvya and Krishna Kāvya emerged for the spiritual benefit of the Hindu community, Islamic traditions penetrated into the compositions of the Punjabi Muslim poets. In the middle of the 19th century, a new era began, with the occupation of the Punjab by the British.

Pre-Nanak Period

Historians of Punjabi literature tend to link their literature with the literary contribution of the 'Gorakhpanthīs', who roamed the length and breadth of the Indian subcontinent before the advent of Guru Nanak. Before the birth of modern Indian languages, they wrote in Apabhramsa, hence they belong to the traditional period. They had created a *lingua franca*, therefore they have been accepted as pioneers of most of the modern Indian literatures. Some of their old hermitages are to be found in the Punjab. Jāyasī mentions their prominent abode at Tilla in West Punjab, in his great epic *Padmāvat*. This is where Punjabi Jāt Rānjhā was initiated into the *Yogic* cult. Ranjha is the hero in the famous Punjabi romantic tale of Hīr and Rānjhā. The *Yogīs* carried forward the tradition of composing *śloks* and *padās*. The *padās* were composed in various musical patterns (*rāgās*). The tradition of writing poetry in various *rāgās* and *rāgiṇīs* was prevalent throughout the country. We find this practice in *Gita Govind*, the famous Sanskrit work of the 12th century by Jaidev. The Bengali saint-poet also wrote *padās* in eastern Apabhramsa, two of which are included in the *Ādi Granth*. The *padās* of Gorakhnath are known as *śabdī*. Traditional metres like the *Dohā* and *Caupai* were used by the *Yogīs* in their hymns. Besides Gorakhnath, mention may be made of other *Yogī* poets, viz. Charpat Nath, Chaurangi Nath (Pooran Bhagat) and Rattan Nath. Gorakhnath is said to have composed *Sapat Vār* (a poem based on the days of the week), *Pandrā Tith* (a poem, on the lunar dates), *Nau Grah* (a poem on

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the nine planets) and *Gyān cautīśī* (a poem on the letters of the alphabet). Other poetic compositions by the *Yogī* poets include *Prāṇ Sanglī* (a poem describing breathing exercises) and *Goṣṭa* (a poem in the form of a conversation). The exact dates of the composition of these poems are not known.

Mehmūd Shīranī in his noted work *Punjāb men Urdu* (regarding Urdu in the Punjab), mentions a poet named Māsūd, who wrote a *Dīwān* (a collection of poems) in Punjabi around A.D. 1040 and also, *Sīharfī* (a poem based on the 30 letters of the Persian alphabet), *Bārāmāha* (a poem on the 12 months of the year) and *Haft Vār* (a poem on the seven days of the week); but these works are not available. Since the Punjab had been a major gateway to India, it frequently became an arena of war. Hence most of the precious heritage was lost because of the looting and arson by invading forces.

Sheikh Baba Farid Shakarganj, known as the father of Punjabi poetry, composed *śloks*, which have remained very popular because of their universal, moral and spiritual value. They were later included in the *Ādī Granth*. They are couplets and mostly in *Dohā* metre. A few examples are given hereunder in translation:

(1) On a pond in saltpetre soil, geese have descended;
They dip their beaks in the water, but do not drink, they burn to fly away.

(2) How long will a tree remain firm on a river bank?
How long will the water be kept in a raw vessel, saith Farid.

(3) With these slender legs, I have wandered over low grounds and hills, O Farid,
Today my cup seems to be at a distance of hundreds of *kos* (miles).

(4) Musk is distributed in the night, saith Farid, no portion is allotted to the sleeping ones,
Those, whose eyes are drowsy, their union (with the Lord) is difficult.

The maturity of thought in the verses of Farid are a pointer to the fact that a good deal of Punjabi literature already existed when he penned his *śloks* and *padās*. His *padās* were modelled on the earlier *rāgā* tradition.

Vār. A significant poetic genre of this time is the *Vār*, which originated in the Rajput period (700–1200). After the death of King Harsha, the country disintegrated into a large number of small kingdoms, each under a Rajput ruler. This period witnessed a new trend in literature. The vernaculars became the literary vehicle of expression. Every ruler or chieftain had bards in his court, who sang the heroic deeds of their kings and their ancestors in the folk-language. In the Punjab, such poetry came to be known as *Vār*. The word 'Vār' seems to have been derived from the word 'Varṇa,' which means 'to praise'. Two idioms in Punjabi *Vār Gauṇā* (to sing the praises) and *Vār Karṇā* (to give a blow) form the basis for this form. *Vār* is a poem, which depicts the brave deeds of the warriors in the battlefield and heaps praises on them for their chivalrous actions. It is composed of stanzas called *Pauṛīs*, which like the rungs of a ladder, lead the narration to a climax.

It is said that Amir Khusrau (1253–1325) composed a *Vār* on the bravery of Tughlak Shah, but the poem is not available now. There are references to a few *Vārs* of the period in the *Ādī Granth*.

Guru Nanak Period

The golden period of Punjabi literature, extends from the birth of Guru Nanak in 1469 up to the passing away of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708. Most of the religious and mystic poetry of this period is preserved in the *Ādī Granth* (which literally means the first book) or *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs and a great anthology of the poetry of the Bhakti Movement. It represents the *Nirguṇ* school of Punjabi Poetry. The poetry of the saints of the pre-Nanak period like Jaidev, Farid, Nāmdev, Trilochan, Kabir, Ravidās, Pīpā, Dhannā, Sain, etc. is included in this great repository. The poetry of the six Sikh Gurus, viz. Guru Nanak Dev, Guru Angad Dev, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ram Das, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur also forms part of the *Ādi Granth*, besides that of several other minor poets.

There were three distinct movements in Punjabi literature during this period. Besides the religious and mystic poetry of the Sikh Gurus, the Sufi saints contributed towards the enrichment of Punjabi literature. *Qissās* or ballads was another significant contribution. Shah Hussain was the prominent Sufi poet of the period and Damodar, Peelo, Hāfiz Barkhurdār, Muqbal and Ahmad were the *Qissā* writers.

The Guru Poetry of the Ādi Granth. In *A History of Punjabi Literature*, Mohan Singh, discussing the contribution of Guru Nanak, has aptly remarked:

> The most marked feature of Nanak's content, form and style is its comprehensiveness. All the major forms of verse and types of poetry and *rāgās* of folk-music are employed; the Hindu, Muslim and Buddhistic religious and cultural vocabulary is there in all important details; the main traits of the current philosophies of Advaita, Dvaita, Shaktaism, Islamic Mysticism and Buddhistic Yoga can be illustrated with suitable quotations from him;....

The traditional metres and forms of poetry used by Guru Nanak, have also been used by the other Gurus. In the

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Granth a major portion of poetry is arranged in different *rāgās* and is thus meant to be sung. Every hymn or *Śabad* is divided into different parts or *padās*. Each *padā* consists of one or more verses. The division of poetry in the *Ādi Granth* is in *Padās*, *Pauṛīs*, *Śloks*, *Chants* and *Swayyās*. Each stanza of a *Vār* is called *Pauṛī*. The hymns of two, three, four, five, six, eight and sixteen *padās* are known as *dupde*, *tipde*, *caupade*, *pancpade*, *chipade*, *aṣṭapadī* and *solhā* respectively. There are 608 *dupdes*, 73 *tipdes*, 1255 *caupades*, 80 *pancpades*, 11 *chipades*, 331 *aṣṭapadīs* and 62 *solhās* in the *Ādi Granth*.

In the case of *Vārs*, in which *śloks* have been used, each *pauṛī* or stanza of the *Vār* is preceded by two or more than two *śloks*. There are 22 *Vārs* in the *Ādi Granth* three by Guru Nanak Dev, four by Guru Amar Das, eight by Guru Ram Das, six by Guru Arjan Dev and one by the bards Satta and Balwand. *Basant kī Vār* of Guru Arjan Dev and *Vār Rāmkalī* of Satta and Balwand are the only *Vārs* to which *śloks* have not been attached. The *pauṛīs* of the *Vār* are written by the same poet, but it is not so regarding the *śloks*. The designation of the poet is therefore mentioned before each *ślok*. But if the *śloks* and the *Vār* are by the same poet, it is mentioned at the beginning of the *Vār*. There are only two instances, where Guru Arjan Dev has added a *pauṛī* of his own to a *Vār* written by his predecessors, viz. the 27th *pauṛī* of *Malār kī Vār* by the first Guru and the 35th *pauṛī* of *Sārang kī Vār* by the fourth Guru. The traditional metre used in a *pauṛī* (stanza) of *Vār* is *Nishānī Chand*, but the Gurus have also used several other metres. Whereas the ordinary *Vār* deals with the warriors in the physical battlefield, the *Vārs* in the *Ādi Granth* deal with the spiritual battlefield, where virtue and vice are at war with each other. The heroic *Vār* contains praises of the warriors, the religious *Vār* of the *Ādi Granth* contains the praises of God, *Satgurū* (the preceptor) and *Gurmukh* (sincere disciple).

Next to *pauṛī*, we have the *ślok* in the *Ādi Granth*. From the very beginning up to the end of the *Ādi Granth*, there are *śloks* attached to the *padās* of the longer poems or the *pauṛīs* of the *Vārs*. All the Gurus, whose *bāṇī* (word) is included in the *Ādi Granth*, wrote *śloks*. Guru Arjan Dev, who prepared the sacred anthology, interspersed his own and his predecessors' *śloks* in the *Vārs*. *Śloks* given at the end as surplus *śloks*, which could not be used in the *Vārs*, are entitled *ślok vārate vadhīk* (the *śloks* which could not be included in the *Vārs*).

The *ślok* like the *pauṛī* is not a stanza form. It is the name given to a couplet, complete in itself. Its significance lies in its brevity of expression. It is mostly subjective. The poet describes his own experiences as in the *śloks* of Kabir and Farid. *Ślok* is found under several heads in the *Ādi Granth*. The *śloks* of Kabir and Guru Tegh Bahadur are couplets. There are, however, a few exceptions to be found, in the *śloks* of Baba Farid. The popular metre of the *ślok* is *dohā* or *dohirā*. Sometimes *Soratha* (a metre, in which the two parts of the verse of *dohā* are reversed) is used instead of *dohā*.

Next in importance to the *ślok* in the *Ādi Granth* is the *chant*. The word *chant* is derived from *Chand* (metre) which is a popular folk-metre. Thus, in the *Ādi Granth*, the *chant* came to signify the metre in which the sacred hymns were written and which carried the praises of the Lord. In the *Ādi Granth*, *chant* consists of one or more *padās*. It is usually of four *padās*. Each *padā* contains four to six verses. The stanza form used is the *kuṇḍalīyā* metre. The verses have been lengthened by the addition of words and phrases like 'merī *Jindaṛīe*' (O My Soul), 'Rām Rāje' (O King Rama), 'Ram' (O Rama) and 'Jīo' (O Soul). Their repetition and the repetition of other words create melody. There are some cases in which the *chants* are preceded by the *śloks*.

Then comes the *swayyā* which is a particular metre (or a stanza form), but the bards (Bhatts), who composed *swayyās* in praise of the Gurus, used many other metres under the heading 'swayyās'. They composed several forms of *swayyā*. Closely examining the above-mentioned forms of poetry, it can be found that the same arrangement of *mātrās*, or measures, is repeated in *pauṛī*, *ślok* and other hymns. The poets did not follow the prosody strictly. They were the poets of the people, who sang popular tunes (e.g. as in the case of *Vārs*). They had no forms of versification to follow while composing their hymns and did not take care to maintain the exact quantity of *mātrās* or the number of verses in a stanza. They used the same measures for different kinds of poems. They followed the folk-tunes, used the same kind of poetic composition for their religious verses as was being done by the secular poets as in *Pāṭṭī* (a poem on the letters of the alphabet), *Bārāmāhā* (a poem on the months of the year), *Vār sat* (a poem on the days of the week), *Ruttī* (a poem on the seasons), *Thiṭṭī* (a poem on the lunar dates), *Bāwan Akhrī* (a poem on the 52 letters of the alphabet), *Pahire* (a poem on the four temporal parts of the night), *Alāhuṇī* (a poem sung at the death of a dear one), *Ghoṛīān* (a poem sung at the time of the marriage, when the bridegroom mounts a mare) and *Vār* (a poem praising the bravery of a warrior).

The word *Paṭṭī* literally means a small, flat piece of wood used by children for writing the alphabet. The name has been given to a poem in which each letter of the alphabet is represented by a stanza. The letter comes at the beginning of the stanza and is usually followed by a word beginning with the same letter. Guru Nanak Dev wrote *Paṭṭī* in *Āsā rāgā*, which is composed on the letters of the Gurmukhi alphabet. The *Paṭṭī* of Guru Amar Das in the same *rāgā* is based on another alphabet of the day. In the latter *Paṭṭī* even one verse contains two or more letters. There are two similar poems named *Bāwan Akhrī*. 'Bāwan Akhrī' literally means that which contains 52 letters. One *Bāwan Akhrī* is composed by Kabir and the other by Guru Arjan Dev. The

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former contains 45 *padās* and the latter 56. There is another similar poem entitled *Dakhnī Oamkār* by Guru Nanak Dev. The word *Oamkār* or *Oam* suggests the beginning of the alphabet. The poem contains 54 *padās*. The letters are not pronounced in this poem as in the *Bāwan Akhrī*. They come at the beginning of the first word of each *padā*. The order of the letters in all these poems is different. In *Bāwan Akhrī* and *Dakhnī Oamkār*, several letters have been repeated. It appears that the alphabets used in the above mentioned five poems belonged to the different parts of north-western India. The alphabet used by Guru Nanak Dev in his *Paṭṭī* is undoubtedly Gurumukhi. It contains all the letters, but their order is different from the order prevalent today. The presence of the letter 'ṛ' (a vowel) in the alphabets of *Bāwan Akhrī* of Guru Arjan Dev and *Dakhnī Oamkār* of Guru Nanak Dev shows that like Gurmukhi, these two alphabets were used in the Punjab or in the western areas, where the influence of the semitic languages had been strong in the last few centuries. The alphabet used in the *Bāwan Akhrī* of Kabir contains all the 33 consonants of the Devanagari alphabet in order. The alphabet used by Guru Amar Das in his *Paṭṭī* is neither Gurmukhi nor Devanagri, but seems to be an alphabet prevalent among the business community of that period. All these poems are akin to *Sīharfī*, based on the 30 letters of the Persian alphabet.

There are four hymns entitled *Pahire*, two by Guru Nanak Dev, one by Guru Ram Das and one by Guru Arjan Dev. There are two *Vār Sat*, one of ten *padās* composed by Guru Amar Das and the other of eight *padās* composed by Kabir. The first day in both the poems is Sunday. There are two *Bārāmāhas*, one by Guru Nanak Dev and the other by Guru Arjan Dev. The first month in both the *Bārāmāhas* is *Chet*. The former contains 17 *padās* and the latter 14. There are two poems entitled *Thittī*, one by Guru Arjan Dev containing 17 *pauṛīs* and 17 *śloks* and the other by Kabir containing 16 *pauṛīs* and one *ślok*. While Guru Arjan Dev begins with the first night of the moon, Kabir begins with *Amāvas* (the dark night). There is a poem entitled *Ruttī* by Guru Arjan Dev containing eight *chants* and 16 *śloks*. The first season mentioned in the poem is spring.

Other forms of poetry used in the *Ādi Granth* are *Sad*, *Goṣṭa* and *Kāfī*. *Sad* literally means 'to call'. To call a person from a distant place requires vigour. The person, who calls, places his hand on the ear and speaks in a loud and lengthened voice. This practice of speaking loudly in a lengthened voice gave birth to the form of poetry called *Sad*. Folk tales of love and adventure, mainly tragic, formed the subject-matter of *Sad*. There is a *Sad* about Mirza Sahiban by Peelu, a contemporary of Guru Arjan Dev. In the *Ādi Granth*, there is a *Sad* written by Sundar, a grandson of Guru Amar Das. *Goṣṭa* means conversation. There was a practice of writing conversation in poetry. Guru Nanak's *Goṣṭas* in *Janamsākhis*, are mostly in prose. There is one *Goṣṭa*, named *Siddh Goṣṭa*, by Guru Nanak, in the *Ādi Granth*. It is a conversation in poetry held with the Yogis of the day. The word 'Kāfī' seems to be a distortion of the Persian word 'Kaifi', which means 'an intoxicated person'. The Gurus and Sufīs, who wrote *Kāfīs* were all God-intoxicated persons. They were intoxicated with the Name of the Lord. They wrote about the God-intoxicated person, his daily life and his experiences in the world. They even advised the men of the world to try to attain the ecstatic state of a God-intoxicated person. In the *Ādi Granth*, there are 22 such *Kāfīs*.

There are some hymns or poems, which contain titles pertaining to their subject-matter, such as *Japu* (remembrance of the Lord), *Ānand* (bliss), *Sukhmaṇī* (jewel of peace), *Sohilā* (praise of the Lord), *Ārti* (worship of the Lord by circumambulating His image), *So Dar* (that door), *So Purakh* (that Purusha), *Alāhuṇī* (a dirge at the time of death), *Ghoṛīān* (a song of marriage), *Din Rain* (day and night), *Vanjārā* (merchant), *Birhaṛe* (songs depicting pangs of separation), *Karhale* (a camel), *Anjalī* (a request), *Suchajjī* (a virtuous woman), *Kuchajjī* (a negligent woman) and *Guṇwantī* (a woman with qualities). *Japu* is the morning prayer of the Sikhs and a masterpiece of Guru Nanak. It is the first poem in the *Ādi Granth*. In the *Ānand* of Guru Amar Das, the disciple is apprised of the method of attaining the state of ecstasy, which consists in meeting the True Guru and remembering the Name of the Lord. *Sukhmaṇī*, a longer poem, composed by Guru Arjan Dev, is a psalm of peace. The disciple is made to understand the path of eternal peace, in detail. *Sohilā*, the eulogy of the Lord, is recited by the Sikhs at bed-time. In *Ārtī*, Guru Nanak has revolted against the age-old convention of circumambulating an image and has sung this poem depicting the glory of the Lord of the universe. In *So Dar*, Guru Nanak has given a description of the front-view of the palace of God. *So Purakh* describes the immortal Purusha. In *Alāhuṇī*, the Guru talks about the inevitability of death and advises the readers to live ideal lives. The word 'Ghoṛī' means 'a mare'. *Ghoṛīān* are marriage-songs sung at the time, when the bridegroom rides a mare in pursuance of the age-old custom. In these hymns the body is said to be a mare, the soul the bride and the Lord the bridegroom. The poem under the title *Din Rain* describes how best we can pass the day and night. The hymn entitled *Vanjārā* gives the reader an idea of the traffic in the spiritual domain. The hymns entitled *Birhaṛe* contain the description of the means by which people can free themselves from the pangs of separation. The word 'Karhale' literally means 'to wage war', it also implies 'to make an effort'. In the hymn entitled *Karhale*, the mind is instructed to make efforts in the spiritual sphere. In Dingal, the word 'Karhale' means 'a camel' which is always out in the deserts. In the poem, the mind is equated with a camel, which is always out in the world.

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māyā. He is asked to return home (the spiritual world). The hymns under the title *Anjalī* are supplications to God for the grant of His *Nāmō*. In *Suchajjī* and *Guṇwantī*, a virtuous woman is shown living under the will of the Lord, fully submitting to the preceptor and the Lord. In *Kuchajjī*, a negligent woman is shown enduring the pangs of separation.

In the Guru Nanak period, besides the Vārs of the *Ādi Granth*, the *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdas and *Chandī dī Vār* of Guru Gobind Singh were significant contributions to Punjabi literature. The *Vārs* of Bhai Gurdas contain an elucidation of Sikh doctrines, with imagery drawn from diverse fields. *Chandī dī Vār* is a model *Vār*, describing the battles of goddess Durga and the demons.

The poetry of Guru Nanak, upanishadic in theme and style, is marked by lyrical exuberance, richness of imagery and conciseness of thought. His masterpiece *Japu* is considered an epitome of the *Ādi Granth*. The Gurus, who succeeded him, only elucidate his ideology in their hymns. By compiling the *Ādi Granth*, Guru Arjan Dev preserved the poetry of the Sikh Gurus and medieval saints for posterity. In order to appreciate the poetic excellence of the compositions of Guru Nanak two instances are given below:

The streams may become the cows,
The springs be of milk and ghee,
The whole earth may become sugar,
pleasing the heart for ever,
The mountains may become of gold and silver,
studded with gems and rubies,
Even then, I may always praise Thee
and never cease to talk of Thee. (tr.)

In the salver of the sky, the sun and the moon are the earthern lamps,
And the cluster of stars are like pearls;
There is incense of sandalwood, *chowrie* (fan) of wind and flowers of all the forest;
What kind of *ārtī* this will be, O Destroyer of transmigration when the trumpet of unstruck melody resounds;
Thou hast a thousand eyes, but also without any eye,
Thou hast a thousand forms, but also without any form,
Thou hast a thousand pure feet, but also without any foot,
Thou hast a thousand fragrances, but also without any fragrance;
This play of Thine has fascinated me.
In every creature, there is the same Light,
Everything is lighted because of this Light. (tr.)

Besides the poetry of Guru Nanak in the *Ādi Granth*, there are a number of compositions said to be by him, found interspersed in the *Janamsākhis* (the biographies) of Guru Nanak and other works. In this category are the *Nāmās* (*Hazarnāmā* in free verse, *Nasīhat-nāmā*, *Karni-nāmā* and *Pāk-nāmā*), *Kāfīs*, *Sīharfīs*, *Rekhtās*, *Munājāt*, etc. written under the influence of Persian literature, and *Prāṇ Sanglī*, *Gyān Sarodai*, *Bānī Bihangam*, *Mātrā*, *Vārs*, *Sahansar-nāmā*, *Paintīs Akhrī*, etc. written under the impact of Indian literary tradition.

Muslim mystic poets of the period wrote *Kāfīs* and *Sīharfīs*. Shah Hussain and Shah Sharaf wrote *Kāfīs*, Sultān Bāhū wrote *Sīharfīs* and there he says:

Through Alif (the first letter of Persian alphabet)
The preceptor has planted *Allah* (God) like Jessamine in my mind,
Where in every vein the place the waters of negativity and positivity have combined,
The plant has spread the fragrance inside on the verge of flowering,
May the perfect preceptor live long, who has installed this plant.

(tr. from *Sīharfī* of Sultan Bahu).

The *Kāfīs* of Shah Hussain are sweet songs characterised by spontaneity, divine simplicity and lyrical exuberance. The first available Punjabi *Qissā* (a longer narrative poem) was written in this period by Damodar, of Jhang, who used the dialect of the area. This is the first *Qissā* about 'Heer'. An example from it is given below:

When they bade farewell, the sisters of the spinning wheel and the courtyards wept,
The trees, bushes, birds and friends wept in extreme anguish,
The mother wept without uttering a word, feeling great grief in her bosom;
Her silence expressed a wish, says Damodar, that I should have married her to Ranjha;
The leaves of the trees wept, the plants in the foliage wept,
O people, the old and young women wailed,
all the seven domestic animals moaned,
The party was leaving, Heer, the daughter of Syals,
in fact, should not have left.

(tr. from Damodar's 'Heer')

The romance of Heer-Ranjha was also versified by Muqbal and Ahmad during this period. Peelu and Hāfiz Barkhurdār composed poems about the romance of Mirzā-Sahibān. Peelu describes Sahiban's beauty thus:

Sahiban went to the market to purchase oil,
she entered the shop of an apothecary,
The shopkeeper forgot the use of his balance and weights,

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The puzzled shopkeeper, who had to weigh the oil,
put the honey in the pot,
The shopkeepers failed in their trade and the peasants
lost their bullocks.

(tr. from Peelu's 'Mirzā Sahibān')

Hāfiz Barkhurdar also composed the *Qissā* of Yusaf-Zulaikha. Though there was no dearth of narrative love poetry in Indian literary tradition, these *Qissās* were composed under the impact of Persian literary tradition. Persian *Mathnavīs* influenced it to a great extent. Because of this impact, Persian words and figures of speech penetrated into the Punjabi language. The Muslim *Qissā* poets also wrote religious poetry and recorded the Islamic traditions in Punjabi verse. Muqbal who wrote 'Heer', also composed a *Jangnāmā* (a poem portraying scenes of a war), depicting the bravery of Hassan and Hussain (the sons of Hazrat Ali) at the war-field of Karbalā.

The Later Mughal Period

The tradition of Sufi and *Qissā* poetry continued into the later Mughal period too. Here we have the culmination of Sufi poetry in Bulhe Shah and the climax of *Qissā* poetry in Waris Shah. It is said that Bulhe Shah and Wāris Shah were class-fellows. Bulhe Shah wrote *Kāfīs* and Waris Shah composed 'Heer'. Both these works are considered the finest specimens of Punjabi poetry. While Bulhe Shah sings of divine love, Waris Shah narrates the love story of Heer and Ranjha in exquisite verse. Their works depict the Punjabi culture through various symbols. Here are two examples, from their poetry. Waris Shah developed a new metre called *Baint* as a befitting vehicle for narrative poetry. Here are two excerpts one each from Bulhe Shah and Waris Shah.

Put an end to it, now put an end to it,
Talk with me smilingly.

You resided in my heart,
But why did you show yourself at a distance?
You seized my heart with your enchantment,
Now you have come under my control;
Put an end to it, now put an end to it
And talk with me smilingly.

You mauled me continuously when I was already
distressed,
You rebounded me like a rubber-ball,
You did not let me speak even and throttled me,
Now you have shot an arrow with full force.
Put an end to it, now put an end to it,
Talk with me smilingly.

You concealed yourself, but I have caught you,
I have entangled you now in my heart,
But you are still powerful for hiding yourself,
Now remain imprisoned in my body.
Put an end to it, now put an end to it
And talk with me smilingly.

O Lord, says Bulha, I am your slave,
I am dying to have a sight of you,
I supplicate repeatedly like a prisoner,
Where will you run away now?
Put an end to it, now put an end to it,
And talk with me smilingly.

(tr. from *Kāfīs* of Bulhe Sh

When the traveller begins his journey
on the chirping of the sparrow,
The ladies begin to churn the milk.
When the morning light appeared,
the sparrows began to chirp.
Some began to churn the milk and
some washed their churning wheels,
Some lifted their ploughs and the others
sought their driving sticks.
The peasants took their yokes in order to
furrow their fields.
In their homes, the ladies are busy grinding
flour in order to knead and cook,
The whole world is busy and the ladies
are busy at their spinning wheels.

(tr. from 'Heer' of Waris Sh

The later Mughal period encompasses nearly the whole the 18th century. This was a period of great turmoil tribulation in the Punjab. Both Bulhe Shah and Waris Sh were conscious of this fact in their works. Hamid preced Waris in writing 'Heer'. A model *Vār Nadir Ṣah* composed by Najābat.

During this period, the saints belonging to the U and Nirmalā sects of Sikhism composed lyrical, mys and metaphysical poetry. The Nirmala saints, who acquired expert knowledge of the Sanskrit language and literature and were imbued with Vedanta, brought a Veda tinge into the interpretation of the Sikh religion and philosophy. The Hindu savants either translated some of religious Sanskrit works or created adaptations Sanskrit classics. But above all, a good deal of devo lyrics were produced. The Muslim divines prepared on the *Sharīat* and the Islamic traditions for the of new converts.

Rama Kāvya and Krishna Kāvya. The two epics—the R yana and the Mahabharata—have inspired the mass well as the poets throughout the centuries. The poets

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period through the medium of various poetic genres conveyed their love and devotion for Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, the two incarnations of Vishnu. Two *Vārs* on Lav and Kush were composed, one by Devi Das and the other by Jasodha Nandan. Translation of a piece from the *Vār* of Jasodha Nandan is given below:

The elephants were killed and thrown away as the clouds in a storm,
Both the brothers challenged the warriors and destroyed them
The wounded horses shattered the chariots into pieces,
The arrows flew with hissing sound from both the sides,
The fierce warriors fell down like the stars from the sky,
The blood flowed like gutters in rain,
The trumpets became silent as though made wet with water.

(tr. from 'Lav Kush dī Vār')

Another *Vār* about Sri Ram Chandar was composed by Jawahar Singh. The loves of Rama and Krishna and cognate subjects were penned in *Bārāmāhas* by Gurdas Singh, Kesho Das, Sanjogi and Mohan Lal. *Bansarī Mahārāj Kriśandī, Jhagrā Kānh Gujrīdā, Kriśan Sanbād* and *Biṣanpade Rāmāyaṇa de* are some of the sweet lyrical poems of the period.

Other Works. Some other significant works of this period are *Vār Haqiqat Rae* by Agra, *Sassī-Punnū* of Ārām, *Kafīs* and *Sīharfīs* by Budh Singh, *Sīharfī, Sat Vārā, Bārāmāha* and *Thittī* by Seva Singh, *Manjarīs* and *Mājhās* by Lalji Das, *Jangnāmā* by Hamid and *Śloks* of Vajīd. The traditional poetic moulds were employed by the poets of the period.

Ranjīt Singh Period

The traditional poetic genres continued to be composed during the Ranjit Singh period, which begins from A.D. 1799 with the occupation of Lahore by Ranjit Singh and ends in 1849 with the annexation of the Punjab by the British. The prominent *Qissā* poets of the period were Hāshim, Ahmad Yār, Qadir Yar and Imam Bakhsh. *Qissās* of Heer-Ranjha, Sohnī-Mahīwāl, Mirzā-Sāhibān, Sassī-Punnū, Rodā-Jalālī (romances of the Punjab); Laila-Majnu, Śirīn-Farhād and others of Persian stock; Pūran-Bhagat, Rājā-Rasālū, Gopi-Chand and Nala-Damayanti (stories from Indian folk and religious literature), etc. were composed. Several *Vārs* and *Jangnāmās* were written. The most important of them being *Vār Harī Singh Nalwa, Vār Pūran Bhagat* and *Vār Rāṇī Kokilān* of Qādir Yār, *Chathiāndī Vār* of Peer Muhammad, *Prem dī Vār* of Saundha and *Jangnāmā Singhān te Farangiān* of Shah Muhammad. *Sīharfīs, Paintī Akhrīs, Bārāmāhas, Satvāre, Kāfīs, Mājhān, Dhole, Ghoṛiāṇ, Rekhate* and *Mithre* were also composed. Several old forms of versification like the *Deodh, Baint, Jhūlnā, Kabit* and *Swayyā* were used. Religious poetry concerning thoughts on Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism written during the period, includes Ramayana of Tulsi Das, *Rām Kathā* and *Kriśan Kathā* of Bagga Singh, *Parchīān Bhagtā Kiān* of Darbarī Dās, *Mehrāj Nāmā* of Qadir Yar, *Sakhī Sarwar dī Kathā* of Nihātā, *Ustat Amritsar kī* of Budh Singh and *Ustat Guru Gobind Singh kī* of Vir Singh.

A few translated specimens of the poetry of this period are given below:

On the other side, the English were on the run,
they were withdrawing and backing away
The ammunition of all their cannons had been spent
and the guns were roaring behind them.
Somebody went and brought this information
that London had been widowed,
Go and see the battlefield, says Shah Muhammad,
the tufts of hair of the whites have been left to decay.

(tr. from Shah Muhammad's *Jangnāmā Singhān te Farangiān*)

The violent beauty of Husan Bāno was highly intoxicating,
Shah Behrām had drunk deep from that wine.
Having drunk the wine of love, he was unconscious with intoxication,
And was waiting for the angel of death.
The arrows were shot from the eyelashes of Husan Bāno,
Which made him writhe in pain like a wounded animal.
On her cheeks hung the black vipers of hair,
Those coiled cruel creatures were sitting on a treasure;
The bloody eyes of Husan Bāno were like sharp daggers.
When she applied antimony to them, they became more cruel.

(tr. from Imām Bakhsh's 'Behrām Gur')

During the latter half of the 19th century, in the British period, traditional poetry continued to be composed.

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Sanskrit

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Origin

The beginnings of Sanskrit poetry, lyrical and ornate, ballad and epic, may be traced back to Rigvedic poetry, which can be regarded as religious in character only in the widest sense of the term. To a critical reader, Rigvedic poetry reveals all those aspects which are to be found in a *kāvya* by way of themes and style. There are several hymns in the Rigveda (*Ṛgveda*) which are in no way connected with any ritual; for example, the hymns addressed to Uṣas, Parjanya, Maruts and Savitṛ are pure Nature poetry. If the hymns addressed to Uṣas describe the glorious early morning phenomenon, those addressed to the Parjanya describe the havoc caused by the rains and try to catch the rhythm of the lashing rains. The hymns to the Maruts describe the storms in all their fury and great strength, while the hymns to the Sun describe its appearance as pre-eminently golden and as filling the entire universe with life, vigour and energy. Similarly, the *Saṁvāda* hymns, popularly known as the 'dialogue hymns', of Urvaśī and Purūravas, Yama and Yamī, Saramā and Paṇis, of Viśvāmitra, and of the Rivers Indra, Indrāṇī and Vṛṣākapi, as well as such hymns as that of the Gambler or the hymn addressed to Speech (*Vāk*), cannot be considered religious. In such hymns, Nature is clearly described with an aesthetic spirit and there is no concept of any religious or material reward present. These hymns deal with the erotic, the pathetic, the heroic; and in them a sincere effort to delineate human emotions and passions has been made. The hymns addressed to Varuṇa by Vasiṣṭha are remarkable for the devotion expressed; in them is to be found lyricism accompanied by a spirit of total surrender, repentance and confession as well as a prayer for mercy. The hymns that describe the war between the Ten kings, popularly known as the Dāśarājña War, can well be regarded as early ballads. There are also many hymns in which the liberality and the generosity of the patrons, who might have been local chiefs or heads of clans, have been described. In these hymns may be seen the elements of courtly poetry. In much of this poetry there can be found poetical devices such as alliteration, simile, metaphor, repetition of certain sounds and words and an economy of words.

The Rigveda stanza quoted below illustrates the point argued above. The poet Kakṣīvān Dīrghātamas while describing Uṣas observes:

aminatī daivyāni vratāni praminatī manuṣyā yugāni
īyuṣīṇām upamā śaśvatīnām āyatīnām pratham
vyadyaut

(I. 124.

This stanza is really the 'high-water mark' of the Rigve
composition. The perfectly balanced construction and
intended antithesis make the verse intensely charming. T
antithesis between *aminatī* and *praminatī* as well as *īyuṣīṇā*
and *āyatīnām* cannot but be deliberately intended; so t
the parallelism between *aminatī* and *āyatīnām*, and *pramin*
and *īyuṣīṇām*. The idea suggested is that the Dawns prese
the laws of the gods (*aminatī*) by their very regu
appearance (*āyatīnām*), while the ages of men waste aw
(*praminatī*) as the Dawns fade day by day (*īyuṣīṇā*
The entire mood has a Wordsworthian overtone. It
but natural that this idea should have been imitated
Gotama Rāhūgaṇa, another Rigvedic poet (I. 92.11-12
Kakṣīvān Dīrghatamas has used a beautiful simile in
'jāyeva patya uśatī suvāsāh' (I. 124.7) and this idea a
expression have been utilized by Vāmadeva Gotama in t
context of Agni (IV. 3.2), by Bṛhaspati Aṅgirasas in t
context of Speech (X. 71.4), and by Aruna Vaitahavya
the context of Agni (X. 91.13). The Dawn appears like
wife, charmingly dressed for her husband, and reveals
charms to him. All this imitation is just like what is found
Kalidasa (Kāḷidāsa) when he picks up 'na yayau na tasth
(neither moved nor stood) from his predecessor, Aśv
ghosha (Aśvaghoṣa), and uses it in his own composition
Such instances can be found in abundance in the Rigve
and reveal the blooming of poetic art in this period.

The Rigvedic poets technically treat each stanza a
separate whole, rather than as a part of a contin
composition. Artistic effects are achieved through rhy
assonance, repetition of the same words and the use
refrains. These elements are typical of ballad poetry and
Rigvedic poetry is, indeed, partly 'bardic' in spirit as
as in execution. It is also 'school poetry', hence the po
freely and without any inhibition imitate their predecess
This practice is what Rājaśekhara, the 9th-century poet,
to later call *āharaṇa*. It is through such imitations of id
expressions and style that poetical conventions arise. T
conventions inherited from earlier times are develope
the classical traditional poetry. It is on account of all th
considerations that Rigvedic poetry may be regarded as
earliest Sanskrit traditional poetry.

Literature that was produced in the periods that follo
became more and more interested in ritual, religion

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philosophy. This development marred, to a certian extent, the development of a proper poetical style; yet in the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas* and in the Upanishads there occur passages remarkable for their poetical beauty and simplicity. In this context, it may be mentioned that the sublimity of thought and directness as well as the simplicity of expression to be found in the *Kaṭha* and the *Svetāśvatara* Upanishads are most moving. Man's innermost urges find eloquent expression here.

There is only indirect evidence available of the way Sanskrit poetry developed in the second period, from the time of Pāṇini (5th century B.C.) to the times of the inscriptions of Rudradāman (160) and the *Harisenapraśasti* of Samudragupta at Allahabad (350). During this period poetry and poetical style were cultivated. Panini wrote his poem *Jāmbavatīvijaya* and Patanjali speaks of *kāvya* written by Vararuchi. Patanjali himself seems to quote lines from the poetical literature before him, and Pingala, his contemporary, indicates in his work on metres, the existence of some love-lyrics composed in the *kāvya* style. Even Pāli literature, such as the *Thera* and the *Therigāthās*, and the *Hathigumpha* inscriptions of Khāravela in the 1st or 2nd century B.C., clearly indicate the existence of the *kāvya* style. The inscriptions offer ample evidence of the development of poetical styles and poetical conventions during their times. In these inscriptions may be seen elegantly and gracefully composed verses, which describe the achievements of the princes. This style heralds the appearance of Asvaghosha, Kalidasa and others of the classical period.

In the third and the final period of Sanskrit poetry a number of poetical compositions belonging to a variety of genres were produced. This period is the classical period during which was produced the epics, *mahākāvyas*, puranas, narrative poems, *praśasti-kāvyas* (adulatory poems) and *sandeśa-kāvyas* (message poems). The epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, are at the start of this period and it is no exaggeration to say that the entire period developed and blossomed under their influence; for, it was they that provided the themes and set the pattern for expression used by later writers. Indeed, they influenced not only the literary artist but also the sculptor.

Major Epics

India is perhaps the only country which can boast of two epics, the Mahabharata of Vyasa (Vyāsa) and the Ramayana of Valmiki (Vālmīki). These two Epics are outstanding creations of the Indian poetical genius. They have, in their own ways, influenced the life, culture and literature of all parts of India shaping the ideals and lives of its people.

Reference has already been made to the Rigvedic hymns, such as the Daśarājña hymn (VII. 18), which describe the heroic activities of the kings of old. These hymns are virtually historical ballads, which ultimately blossomed into the epics. The origins of the Mahabharata and Ramayana lie in this historical ballad poetry of Vedic times.

The Mahabharata

Vedic literature does not show any knowledge of the major events or any acquaintance with the major characters of the Mahabharata. The *Brāhmaṇas* and the Upanishads speak of the *Ākhyānas*, *Itihāsa*, Purana and *Gāthā-nārāśaṁsī*, yet there is no reference to the great battle fought on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. The *Brāhmaṇas* mention Kurukshetra as the seat of their sacrificial sessions, not as the site of a major battle. The *Kuntāpa* hymns of the *Atharvaveda* (XX. 127–136) mention King Pārīkṣita as a peace-loving king under whom the Kurus prospered. Janamejaya, the son of Parīkṣita and Bharata, the son of Sakuntala and Dushyanta, are also referred to. The *Yajurveda* refers to the Kurus, the Pāñcālas and the Kuru-Pāñcālas, while the *Kāṭhakasaṁhitā* describes the sacrificial feast of the Kuru-Pāñcālas and mentions Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the son of Vicitravīrya, but there is no reference either to Pāṇḍu and his sons or to Duryodhana, Duhśāsana, Karṇa and others. The name Arjuna occurs in the *Brāhmaṇas* as a secret name of Indra and has nothing to do with the polite hero of the Epic. The *Sāṁkhāyana-śrauta-sūtra* mentions the war at Kurukshetra, in which the Kauravas perished, and the *Āśvalāyana-gṛhya-sūtra* mentions, among the writers to be honoured, the authors of the Bharata and the Mahabharata (III. 44). It is Panini (8.3.95; 3.2.165; 6.2.38) who, for the first time, mentions and discusses the forms Yudhiṣṭhira, Bhīma, Vidura and the compound mahabharata, and it is in Patanjali that the first reference to the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas is to be found.

The *Tipiṭaka* of the Bauddhas shows some faint acquaintance with the Mahabharata. It appears to know the life of Krishna, but does not refer to the *Harivaṁśa*, the Mahabharata or the *Mausala-parvan*. The Jātaka stories mention the names Pandava, Dhanañjaya, Yudhiṭṭhila, Dhatarattha and Vidura and also refer to the *svayamvara* of Draupadī and her marriage to five husbands. Yet it cannot be asserted on the basis of these references that the *Tipiṭaka* knows the Epic very well, for Pandava is the name of a horse, Dhananjaya and Yudhisthira are Kuru kings at Indraprastha, Vidura is a prince on one occasion and a minister on another, and the great heroine of the Epic, Draupadi, is a fallen and depraved woman.

From all these facts it would appear that the Mahabharata did not exist till the end of the Vedic period and that it was only by the 4th century B.C. that an epic with the title *Bhārata* (Mahabharata) had come into existence. This Epic, as the *sūtras* of Sāmkhāyana, Āśvalāyana and Panini indicate, dealt with the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Since the *Tipiṭaka* produced in the East

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does not show any definite knowledge of the Epic, it may be conjectured that the Mahabharata originated in the western regions of India. According to some scholars, the great war was fought in 3102 B.C., at the beginning of the Kali age according to astronomical calculations. India's early political history begins with the Śiśunāgas, the Nandas and the Mauryas. Since the Epic does not show any knowledge of these kings, it is probable that it deals with an earlier age in Indian history. By the 4th century A.D., however, the Epic had developed into its present form. Literary and inscriptional evidence clearly show that by the 4th century A.D. the Mahabharata was regarded as a holy text. Kumārila (7th century) regarded the Epic as a Smriti (*Smṛti*) and referred to all its sections as *parvans*. Subandhu and Banabhatta (Bāṇabhaṭṭa, 600–650) considered the Epic an excellent poetical work and the last word in literary art. In the age of Banabhatta, the Epic was publicly recited in temples on festive occasions. Land-grants from the 5th century onwards quote from the Epic.

The crux of the Epic is the ballad that refers to its main theme, the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Round this historical ballad came to be grouped other historical ballads dealing with kings and heroes of ancient India, even when their episodes had no relation to the central theme. It is easy to imagine the great popularity that such a compilation must have enjoyed. This popularity of the ballad-compilation attracted the attention of the priests who 'brahmanized' it by adding to it myths and puranic and didactic stories which reflected their philosophy, ideals, ethics and social law. The collection thus became the vehicle of the not very well-educated priests, to convey to the masses the Brahmanical ideals. In this manner came to be introduced in the Epic, stories about Vishnu and Siva and kings, material that properly belonged to the Puranas. The *Harivaṁśa*, describing the life of Krishna, is a *Kṛṣṇa-purāṇa* but has been added to the Mahabharata. Like the Saivas, the Vaishnavas and the Bhāgavatas, the ascetics of those times also introduced in the Mahabharata their stories glorifying their ideals and heroes. Thus, what was originally a Kuru-Pandava ballad came to be the treasure-house of religious, didactic, bardic and ascetic poetry of early India.

The Epic is an epic of growth. Tradition also accepts such a position when it speaks of the three stages of its development, the *Jayā*, the *Bhārata* and the *Mahābhārata*. The *Jayā* was the song of victory of the Pandavas and was transmitted by Vyasa, its author, to his student Vaiśampāyana. Vaisampayana recited it at the serpent-sacrifice of King Janamejaya. At this recitation, Ugraśravas, the son of Lomaharṣaṇa, heard it and later recited it during the 12-year sacrificial session of Śaunaka. The original Epic was of 3,800 verses, in the second phase it had grown to 24,000 verses and in the third and final phase it had 66,000 verses.

The Mahabharata consists of 18 *parvans* and describes the war at Kurukshetra, fought between the Kauravas and the Pandavas for the kingdom of Hastinapura. The Pandavas claimed, and received half of the kingdom from the Kauravas, their cousins and the sons of Dhritarashtra. Under the leadership of Yudhisthira, the Pandavas prospered and performed the *Rājasūya* sacrifice. The jealous Kauravas invited Yudhisthira, for a gambling match, defeated him, deprived him of his kingdom and sent him and his brothers to lead a life of exile in the forest for 13 years adding the condition that if they were found out in the 13th year they had to go into exile again. The Pandavas successfully fulfilled the conditions and returned to ask for their kingdom. When their wish was denied and all peace efforts failed, the thoughtless Kauravas not heeding the wise words of Krishna, plunged into a war. Thus the great war ensued. The Kauravas perished and the Pandavas emerged successful.

In this main story of the Epic there are many thrilling incidents described with remarkable vigour and poetic art. Some of these incidents are, the stay of the Pandavas in disguise at the court of Virāṭa, the gambling match and the consequent insulting of Draupadi, the terrible vows of Bhima to destroy Duryodhana and Duhśāsana, the killing of Abhimanyu, Jayadratha and Droṇa, the fight between Karna and Arjuna, the killing of the sons of Draupadi by Aśvatthāman at dead of night, and the perishing of Dhritarashtra, Gāndhārī and Kuntī in a forest fire. All these incidents enthral the reader, appealing to different emotions. There is a vigour, candidness and robust realism about all these incidents that make the Epic a masterpiece. But above all, it is the Bhagavad Gita, that Krishna teaches Arjuna at the beginning of the war, that is best known world-wide. It is a classic that has justly become a part of the world literature.

The Mahabharata is the biggest epic of the world and its importance can be compared only with the Rigveda. As a treasure-house of early Indian religious and secular thought of the country's legends and myths, its importance can never be emphasized too much. It is an invaluable work for it provides insight into the innermost depths of the soul of the Indian people. Judged as a work of literary art, it has few equals. In its story of revenge and bloodshed, it presents a variety of characters—peace-loving and haughty sages, beautiful forest girls and faithful wives, brave heroes and pious kings. In remarkably simple and flowing language it catches the din of the war, the pathos of lament and the serenity of philosophical moods. It is as much at home describing the wrath of the heroes as it is when describing the lamentations of grief-stricken mothers of fallen heroes. It presents life in all its complexity and therefore appeals to the whole of humanity. It is therefore no surprise that the Mahabharata has exercised tremendous influence on artists of all types in later generations. It has provided themes for poets, dramatists and sculptors—and continues to do so in this age too.

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The Ramayana

The Ramayana differs from the Mahabharata in many respects. It is smaller in size, more unified in form and more polished and ornate in expression. Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata, is a mythical personality, Valmiki, the author of Ramayana, appears to have been a historical personality. The Mahabharata is an *Itihāsa*, the Ramayana is an *Ādikāvya*, the first ornate poem. The Mahabharata is *Itihāsa-purāṇa*, the Ramayana is *Itihāsa-kāvya*. The Ramayana, so different from the Mahabharata, however, resembles it in one respect: the tremendous influence that it too has exercised over the life and thought of the Indian people. The stern idealism of Rama, the fidelity of Sita, the devotion of Hanuman, the brotherly love between Rama and Bharata have indeed had a great moral influence on the men, women and children of India all these centuries. Valmiki, who has used an embellished style, has charmingly described Nature. He has cleverly used different figures of speech, revealing great poetical sensitivity and a fine sense of literary art. Poets, dramatists and sculptors have been inspired by Valmiki and have not only taken their themes from Ramayana but have also tried to imitate his style.

The Ramayana has seven *kāṇḍas* (sections): the *Bāla*, *Ayodhyā*, *Āraṇya*, *Kiṣkindhā*, *Sundara*, *Yuddha* and *Uttara*. These *kāṇḍas* comprise 24,000 verses in all. The main story, that of Rama, the prince of Ayodhya, seems to have two distinct parts: one narrating the events at Ayodhya, the other the war with the Rākṣasas in the south.

King Daśaratha has four sons from his three queens, Kausalyā, Sumitrā and Kaikeyī. The sons are Rama, Lakshmana, Śatrughna and Bharata. Rama, because of his excellent qualities, is loved by all. He is the obvious choice for the throne and his coronation is fixed. Kaikeyi, who has received two boons from Dasaratha, is ill-advised by her maid Mantharā and decides to encash these boons. She asks that the throne be given to her son Bharata and that Rama be exiled for 14 years to the forest. Dasaratha hesitates but Rama goes to the forest when he learns the facts. Sita, his wife, and Lakshmana accompany him. Bharata on learning what his mother has done, refuses to accept the kingdom on the death of Dasaratha. But when he requests Rama to come back, Rama refuses. These are the main events at the court of Ayodhya.

Ravana has nursed a hostile feeling towards Rama ever since the *svayaṁvara* of Sita, when he could not win her. Added to this, Surpanakha, his sister, is insulted by the princes in the forest. Ravana with the help of Marica, who takes the form of a golden deer, lures Rama away from Sita and carries her away to Lanka, his capital. Rama, full of grief begins a search for Sita. A friendship is formed with the monkey king Sugriva and Sita is found in Lanka by Hanuman. Ravana refuses to return Sita and a battle ensues in which he perishes. Rama returns to Ayodhya with Sita after 14 years and is made to accept the kingdom by Bharata, who has acted as a trustee during Rama's absence. Rama becomes king but when scandal about Sita's stay with Ravana spreads, he abandons her. She seeks refuge with Valmiki and gives birth to twins in his hermitage When Rama performs a Horse Sacrifice (*Aśwamedha Yāga*) his horse finds its way to the hermitage where it is captured by Lava and Kusa, the twins. A fight ensues, recognition takes place and father and sons are reunited. Sita, unable to bear the grief, is received by Mother Earth. Rama is described as having been steadfast throughout and as having stood on the side of truth. This is the second part of the story. Scholars have felt that the two parts of the story are but loosely connected. While the first part has a realism all its own, the second is full of myth and marvel and is, in all probability, imaginary. The Indian mind has, however, accepted the story as a homogeneous one.

A critical study of the Ramayana reveals that, of its seven *kāṇḍas*, *kāṇḍas* 2–6 form the kernel of the Epic, while *kāṇḍas* 1 and 7 are later additions to this kernel. These additions contain Puranic myths and legends resembling those in the Mahabharata. These stories, unrelated to the main story of Prince Rama, are narrated in a language and style far inferior to that of the *kāṇḍas* 2–6. Further, in these two *kāṇḍas*, Rama is regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Highest Deity, while in the main body Rama is a prince and Indra is regarded as the Highest Deity. Even in the main body there are interpolations, those who recited the Epic adding portions to cater to the tastes of their audiences. The text of the Ramayana, like that of the Mahabharata, has been preserved in two recensions, the Northern and the Southern. But in the case of the Mahabharata it is the Northern recension that gives the older text, while in the case of the Ramayana it is the Southern.

Some centuries must have elapsed between the composition of the main body of the Epic and that of the two later *kāṇḍas*. There are two indications that support such an assumption: in the main body of the Epic, Rama is a Kshatriya prince and Valmiki a poet, but in the later sections Rama is the incarnation of Vishnu and Valmiki is a legendary figure. There is also a good deal of difference between the language and style of the main body and of the later sections. The Mahabharata has in it one *Rāmopākhyāna*, wherein the story of Rama is narrated to Yudhishthira in an effort to console him. This account appears to be a summary of the Ramayana. This would appear to indicate that the Ramayana was completed before the Mahabharata. The smaller size of the Ramayana also indicates that it would have required less time for completion than the Mahabharata. The similarities of the legends and the myths which occur in both these Epics suggest that these portions were added to both the Epics during a stage of common development. The Mahabharata deals with Krishna, who is an incarnation

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of Vishnu, and the Ramayana deals with Rama, who too is regarded as an incarnation of Vishnu. Tradition considers Rama the predecessor of Krishna and, as such the Ramayana appears to some to be the earlier composition, but all literary evidence points to the Ramayana being the later composition. Panini, Patanjali and inscriptions of the pre-Christian era do not refer to Rama. The simplicity of the Mahabharata also suggests that it is the earlier composition, while the ornate style and artistic excellence of the Ramayana suggest that it is a later composition. The action in the Mahabharata has a primitive realistic roughness about it, while in the Ramayana it lacks vigour, force and realism. The culture of the Mahabharata appears to be somewhat primitive, while that of the Ramayana is polished and refined. The queens in the Mahabharata are a real match for Kshatriya heroes, while the queens in the Ramayana greatly resemble the queens of the classical Sanskrit Drama.

Valmiki describes the Ramayana as a *kāvya* and *ākhyāna* that deals with *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*. Its style is simple, sweet and flowing. The movement is nowhere obstructed by the use of out-of-the-way words or by long compounds. The figures of speech used are the simile and the metaphor and in this respect Valmiki has been the source of inspiration of such poets as Asvaghosha, Kalidasa and their countless successors. The emotions developed are love, (*śṛṅgāra*), heroism (*vīra*) and pathos (*karuṇa*). Valmiki does not appear to have been interested in showing his ability to use various metres; the simple, flowing *anuṣṭubh* seems to have been his favourite metre. He is a lover of Nature in all its aspects and his pleasing descriptions of rivers and forests, lakes and oceans, dawn and sunset, moonrise and starry nights have been models for generations of later poets. His characters are lofty and the moral values which they reveal in their conduct have played a signal part in shaping the Indian character. The Ramayana is a happy combination of the realistic and the romantic, the natural and the supernatural. The Ramayana is unrivalled in both its lofty thought and in its artistic expression.

The Ramayana has three important aspects: *Kāvya*, *Itihāsa* and *Dharmaśāstra*. Like the Mahabharata it has influenced the culture and literature of later times, but while the Mahabharata deals with the practical aspects of life, the Ramayana deals with the highest ideals. This perhaps explains the wider appeal of the Ramayana and why it has been preferred as a model and source for later literary works.

Puranas

The word Purana means 'old' or 'ancient'. In early Vedic literature it is always mentioned along with the word *itihāsa* with which it appears to be closely related. Purana, as a literary term, means a narrative of an ancient episode which is related to history. The early Puranic tales were cosmogonic and cosmological in essence. Later, they included tales about gods and ancient royal personalities. According to tradition, there are 18 Puranas, and Vyasa is believed to be their author. The Puranas, like the *itihāsas*, were transmitted by the *Sūtas*, bards, who were socially inferior to the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas.

By traditional definition, a Purana should deal with five specified subjects (*purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇam*). It should discuss the creation of the world (*sarga*), the periodical destruction of the world and its consequent recreation (*pratisarga*), the genealogy of gods and sages (*vaṁśa*), the long periods in the history of the world during each of which there is a Manu as president and caretaker (*manvantaras*), and, finally, the history of the solar and lunar royal dynasties (*vaṁśānucarita*). In fact, however, the Puranas deal with many other matters. These Puranas are sectarian in character, for they are designed to propagate Vaishnavism, Saivism or Bhagavatism. They also discuss philosophy, such as Advaita Vedanta, Sāṁkhya and Yoga, yet the theistic strain is dominant. They also have sections that deal with the duties and rights of the four castes and of the four *āśramas* and often describe Brahmanical rites and ceremonies.

The 18 Puranas are the *Brahma*, *Padma*, *Viṣṇu*, *Vāyu*, *Bhāgavata*, *Nārada*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Agni*, *Bhaviṣya*, *Brahmavaivarta*, *Liṅga*, *Varāha*, *Skānda*, *Vāmana*, *Kūrma*, *Matsya*, *Garuḍa* and *Brahmāṇḍa*. Tradition speaks of an equal number of *Upapurāṇas* which are also more or less of the same type as the principal Puranas.

As literary efforts, the Puranas are not likely to satisfy lovers of poetry. These writings seem to care neither for form nor content and display everywhere their lack of a sense of proportion. They are careless in expression and language, their versification is poor and they often sacrifice grammar for metre. Their content is varied and does not fall into any pattern. Their most common, and perhaps greatest, fault is that of exaggeration.

The Puranas, however, are important from the point of view of ancient history. They are a valuable source for their accounts of ancient kings. They might exaggerate in other matters, but they contain germs of historical truth. The *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* is a very important source for information about the Maurya dynasty (326–185 B.C.), while the *Matsya-purāṇa* is invaluable for its account of the Andhra dynasty (of about A.D. 225). The *Vāyu-purāṇa* reliably describes the Imperial Guptas and their rule. These Puranas also contain valuable accounts of the Ābhīras, Gardhabhilas, Śakas, Yavanas, Tusaras and Huns. The Puranas do not mention any famous kings after the 7th century A.D. This would seem to indicate that the composition of the Puranas had been completed by that time. The *Lalita-vistara* of the Buddhists has been called a Purana and, indeed, has much in common with the Puranas as far as its literary aspects are concerned. Many of the texts of the Buddhists, such as the

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Saddharmapuṇḍarīka, *Kanranda-vyūha* and *Mahāvastu* are reminiscent of the Puranas, containing as they do the same wild exaggerations and glorification of devotion (*bhakti*). It would therefore appear that the earlier Puranas had come into existence by the 1st century A.D. The form appears to have then become very popular and was taken over by the Buddhists and the Jainas.

The Puranas may be poor literary compositions, full of wild overstatement and exaggeration, yet there are in them occasional passages of appealing poetry, especially when devotion is described. The *Bhāgavata-purāṇa*, which uses much archaic vocabulary, also contains captivating lyrical passages. The Puranas are also important from yet another point of view: they have provided several themes and suggestions to later poets and dramatists. Puranas narrate their own versions of the stories of Sakuntala, Urvasi and others. In them is also to be found the origin of historical and devotional poetry. The Puranas are therefore important not only for the information they contain about the religious and political history of India, but also because they are an important part of Indian literary history. Their place is not by the side of the Vedas but alongside the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.

Mahākāvyas

Bhāmaha (c. 600) and Dandin (c. 700), the earliest writers of poetics, describe the ornate epic while attempting to define the *Mahākāvya*. The two *Ārṣa-mahākāvyas*, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, had suggested a certain pattern. A poem in order to deserve the name *mahākāvya* had to be extensive, full of majestic descriptions of war and Nature, of marriages and of political intrigues. Its canvas had to be vast. But the perusal of the poems of Asvaghosha gives the impression that he had a model which he followed. If this be true, then the form goes back to a considerably earlier period and it would appear that Dandin and Bhamaha had before them not only the *Ārṣa-mahākāvyas*, but also the poems of Asvaghosha, and the works of Kalidasa.

Asvaghosha. Asvaghosha (Aśvaghoṣa), the spiritual adviser of Kanishka, wrote two poems, the *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* which can be regarded as the Buddhist *mahākāvyas* that set the pattern for the ornate epics. The *Buddhacarita*, which was translated into Chinese in the 5th century and into Tibetan in the 7th century, originally had 28 cantos of which only 17 are now available. Of these 17, only cantos 2–13 and a part of 1 and 14 are by the poet; the remaining parts appear to be the work of one Amritananda from Nepal (A.D. 1830). The style in these later cantos is quite different from that of the genuine cantos. These new cantos are also not found in the Chinese and Tibetan versions. Asvaghosha who was from Sāketa in Eastern India, reveals considerable Brahmanical learning. He also shows close acquaintance with the Ramayana of Valmiki for whom he had, it is clear, great respect.

Asvaghosha, an ardent devotee of the Buddha and His teachings, clearly reveals his poetic emotions and religious fervour in his composition. He is a clever painter of word-pictures and the passages in which he describes Prince Gautama moving through the city, the eagerness of the beautiful women of Kapilavastu wanting to look at him from the windows of their mansions, the four famous scenes —the views of the diseased, of old age, of death and of a mendicant—that set the Buddha meditating on life, the night-scene in which sleeping women are seen at their worst, are all remarkable for their vividness, realism and poetical qualities. The success of Asvaghosha may be judged from the fact that Kalidasa has not hesitated to imitate him. In Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhava* (VII. 56–59) there are passages that are similar to compositions by Ashvaghosha in the *Buddhacarita* (III. 13–24). *Kumārasambhava*, VII. 62 and *Raghuvaṁśa* VII. 5–16 are also similar to *Buddhacarita*, III. 19. These parallels are evident not only in ideas but also in diction and imagery.

Asvaghosha's other *mahākāvya*, the *Saundarananda*, a work of 18 cantos, also has the theme of conversion and renunciation. The *Mahāvagga* and the *Nidānakathā* mention that Nanda, the half-brother of the Buddha, was converted by the Buddha and renounced worldly life. On this slender suggestion Asvaghosha has built a beautiful poem. Nanda is married to a charming woman, appropriately named Sundarī, whom he loves intensely. Their happy, romantic life is very delicately described by the poet. Nanda meets the Buddha who desires him to renounce the world, but Nanda declines, for he hates the life of a monk. Later his experiences with pride and lust—exquisitely described by the poet—lead Nanda to conversion and renunciation. Sundari laments the loss of her husband. In these passages, Asvaghosha gives the poet in him full rein while curbing the preacher. The harassing conflict in the mind of Nanda, the piercing lament of Sundari, the descriptions of heaven and the divine nymphs have all been done with the sure hand of a master. The poetry of Asvaghosha appeals to readers by its simplicity, sublimity and sincerity. He avoids a display of scholarship and makes no deliberate effort to use a refined and polished phraseology.

A great scholar, well versed in Brahmanical and Buddhistic learning, Asvaghosha is also thoroughly familiar with the poetic art as may be seen from his handling of metre and different figures of speech. A forthright writer, Asvaghosha avowedly wrote for the masses, and not for scholars, to awaken religious fervour and philosophical interest, not to provide sensuous delight or exhibit his ability. His transparent religious zeal and earnestness lifted his poetry to a level to which even later Sanskrit poetry, with its greater technical perfection, could not reach. Asvaghosha and

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Kalidasa were both influenced by Valmiki, but it is significant to note that though Asvaghosha was not as perfect and polished as Kalidasa, he was occasionally imitated by the latter. No tribute could be greater.

Kalidasa. The ornate epics usually derived their themes from the myths and legends about god heroes, found in the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas. Kalidasa, in *Kumārasaṃbhava*, deals with the puranic story of the marriage of Parvati and Siva and the birth of Skanda (or Kārtikeya) who led the celestial army to success in the war with the demon Tāraka.

The *Kumārasambhava*, a poem of 17 cantos, divides itself into two parts, one consisting of cantos 1–8 and dealing with the love between Parvati, the daughter of Himalaya and Menā, and Lord Siva the ascetic; and the other consisting of cantos 9–17, dealing with the birth of Skanda and his triumphant battle. The second part is unattractive and Kalidasa's authorship of it is doubtful. The first part is different; in it Kalidasa is at his best.

The poem opens with the glorious description of the Himalayan mountain in which Kalidasa also reveals his fine poetic sensitivity. The conversation between Indra and Madana, the God of Love, reveal Kalidasa's knowledge of human nature and political affairs. The gods are anxious that Siva accepts the hand of Parvati who was fallen in love with Him, for they know that a son from this union will lead them to victory in their war against the demon Tāraka. But this task is not simple, for Siva has turned into a recluse after the death of his first wife Satī. Kamadeva intent on getting Siva married to Parvati thinks his work will be easy and brags of his powers. He proceeds to the scene of action with his friend Vasanta (Spring) and charming wife Rati. With the help of Vasanta he first changes the entire atmosphere of the place where Siva is observing penance. Kalidasa charmingly describes with subtle touches this change in the atmosphere and the intoxication felt by the birds and beasts of the place: 'the bee and his beloved drank honey from the same flower', he sings. As soon as Parvati approaches Siva, with flowers and other articles of worship, Kāmadeva sees his chance and aims his arrow at Siva. As a result, Siva is a little disturbed and is attracted by the beauty of Parvati. Bent on knowing the cause of this fall, Siva sees Kamadeva behind a tree, aiming another arrow at him. In anger he opens his third eye and reduces Kamadeva to ashes. Rati's lament has a tinge of artificiality about it; nevertheless the passage is a remarkable piece of poetry by Kalidasa.

Frustrated by this failure Parvati renews her efforts to win Siva this time by austere penance. Her penance is admirably described. Siva now appears as a young ascetic (*Vaṭu*) to test the sincerity of her love. The dialogue that follows between Parvati and the *Vaṭu* is one of the finest passages of Kalidasa. It reveals his adoration for Siva as well as his skills in rendering the sentiment of love. When Siva grants Parvati her wish and reveals His true form, she is baffled. It is here that Kalidasa has used Asvaghosha's celebrated phrase 'na yayau na tasthau' (she did neither leave nor stay)—a phrase which describes the conflicts in her mind. The gods now approach Siva and persuade him to marry Parvati. Kalidasa then describes the amorous sports of Siva and Parvati.

These first eight cantos are undoubtedly genuine and have been appreciatively commented on by poeticians and commentators alike. The eighth canto which describes the love-sports of Siva and Parvati, however, has been objected to, on grounds of impropriety, by Ānandavardhana (c. 85[illegible]) and others. These cantos present poetry that is refined and graceful. Siva and Parvati are humanized and are delineated with warmth and colour. Kalidasa's charming fancy, gentle humour, sense of the tragic and his Saivism all find artistic expression in these eight cantos. The result is a delightful narrative.

The poem has, however, a more serious purpose. It is an impassioned argument for a positive domestic life, a counter-argument to the poetic pleadings of Asvaghosha for a life of renunciation. Asvaghosha in his *Buddhacarita* and *Saundarananda* preached a life of *Nivṛtti*. On the other hand, the Siva of the Brahmanical poets renounces asceticism, and he marries Parvati for the sake of the good of the world. He thus sets the example for the world to follow. When viewed from this point of view, the eighth canto appears to have been composed with a purpose.

Kalidasa's other ornate epic, the *Raghuvaṁśa* is a poem of 19 cantos in which Kalidasa describes the Raghu dynasty of those who belong to the Ikṣvāku race of Solar genealogy. The cantos contain accounts of Dilipa and his wife Sudakṣiṇā, the mighty Raghu, the emotional Aja, the mighty Dasaratha, the great Rama and Sita, the valiant Lava and Kuśa and the less important princes of the dynasty. After the account of Lava and Kusha, the poet seems to hurry with his narrative and rounds off the poem with a description of King Agnivarṇa who is more dissipated than valiant. But even this picture of the last of the great kings has been drawn with grace, delicacy and sympathy. Many regard the poem as incomplete. The main interest of Kalidasa in the poem is, of course, Rama, to whom three cantos are devoted. The poet's interest in the predecessors of Rama also appears to be greater than that in his successors. To the poet, the mighty Raghu princes are shining examples of the Brahmanical way of life. They appear as upholders of a great tradition, men who contain their personal grief while [illegible]ing the state. The *Raghuvaṁśa* naturally appears more like a great picture gallery, with diverse attractive paintings, than a unified poem. It is noteworthy that Asvaghosha speaks of the Buddha as a prince of the Ikṣvāku clan and of the solar race, while Kalidasa describes the race of Raghu as descended from the Sun, *sūrya-prabhava-vaṁśa*. Yet

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preaching of the two poets is deliberately different; one is interested in preaching Buddhism, while the other preaches Brahmanical idealism.

The *Raghuvaṁśa* reveals Kalidasa at his best and is by common consent regarded as supreme among the celebrated five *mahākāvyas*. There are a number of passages in the poem which are noteworthy for excellent expression, and happy poetical imagery and which hold the reader with their sheer beauty. The passage in which Kalidasa describes Indumati as a 'walking flame' won him the title 'Dīpaśikhā-Kāḷidāsa'. Dilipa and his wife tending the cow of Vasiṣṭha, the fight of Raghu with Indra and his encounter with the student Kautsa, the dialogue between Dilīpa and the lion, the marriage of Aja and Indumatī, the lament of Aja over Indumati after her unexpected death, the aerial return of Rama and Sita to Ayodhya, the account of Agnivarna are all unforgettable passages that have held an unparalleled sway over the minds of generations of readers of Sanskrit literature.

Middle-period Mahākāvya

Asvaghosha and Kalidasa handed down to their successors the tradition of the *mahākāvya* as a genre. The later poets were, it appears, guided more by the form than by the spirit behind the form. In the poems of Kalidasa the interest in the main theme is always sustained, while descriptions are used only to heighten the beauty of the narration. Descriptions and verbal acrobatics are never allowed to impede the progress of the narrative. Later writers such as Bhaṭṭi, Kumāradāsa and others seem to follow the pattern given to them by the writers on poetics under whose guidance they worked almost like slaves of the letters. With Kalidasa everything was spontaneous and inspired; with these new poets everything was laboured. They show mastery over the language, close acquaintance with the different branches of knowledge and sound scholarship. But they usually indulge in exaggeration and extravagance. There is no balance between the matter and the manner, and the artificiality is tiresome. These poets chose themes from the epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, but lacking directness and vividness they failed to enthuse the reader.

Bharavi. Bhāravi (c. 600) in his *Kirātārjunīya* deals with the celebrated story of the winning of the *Pāśupata* weapon by Arjuna from Lord Siva, whom he has pleased with his valour. The Pandavas, in exile in the Dvaitavana, pass the years in idleness. Draupadi and Bhima try to arouse the anger of Yudhishthira, to get him to wage war on the Kauravas. Vyasa appears on the scene and advises them to move to the Kāmyakavana. On his advice, the valiant Arjuna sets out to win, through penance, divine weapons which would help defeat the Kauravas. Siva tests Arjuna by appearing as Kirāta. A fight ensues between them when both lay claim to the boar killed by arrows they discharged simultaneously. Siva then reveals his true form and gives Arjuna the weapons he seeks.

This simple narrative has been enlarged by Bharavi by adding embellishments that have little relation with the main story. The account of how Duryodhana rules gives the poet a chance to display his knowledge of political affairs. The description of autumn, the Himalayas and the love-sports of the *Apsaras* are only meant to reveal the powers of description of the poet, for none of these are essential to plot or character. There are some fine scenes of Nature admirably drawn, but the feeling of artificiality never vanishes. Even the fights which Bharavi describes are not thrilling combats but unreal struggles wherein magic and miracles play a prominent part.

It is futile to seek simplicity, the outstanding characteristic of the age of Asvaghosha, in Bharavi. For instance, there are, in the 15th canto, verbal feats which only reveal gross artificiality at the cost of intelligibility. His studied vocabulary, strict adherence to grammar and the use of a variety of metres only enhance this artificiality. His verse lacks music but has a grand weight of meaning and content. His strength lies in his descriptions and subtle arguments. Tradition ascribes the singular quality of *arthagaurava* to Bharavi. The poet is called 'Chatra-bhāravi' (umbrella-bharavi) for presenting the pollen of lotus flowers blown by the whirling wind as taking the shape of an umbrella over Krishna's head. He introduces the word 'Śrī' in the last verse of each canto and the whole poem is known as *śryaṅka* (bearing the sign sri). Bharavi, on the whole, impresses the reader as being a poet of considerable literary and massive scholarship.

Bhatti. Bhaṭṭi lived either in the beginning of the 6th century or in the middle of the 7th century A.D. His *mahākāvya*, popularly known as *Bhaṭṭikāvya*, is a poem of 20 cantos and narrates the story of the Ramayana up to the coronation of Rama after his victorious return from Lanka. The theme is commonplace and the narration uninspiring. The poet's main aim, however, is not to narrate the story of Rama, but to illustrate accurately and correctly the rules of grammar and the different figures of speech. The poet takes pride in observing that his composition is a lamp to those who are masters of grammar but to the uninitiated it is as a mirror is to the blind. The poem's appeal is therefore to only a very restricted circle of scholars, and not to lovers of poetry in general.

Kumaradasa. When Kumāradāsa lived is uncertain. His poem, *Jānakīharaṇa*, is a *mahākāvya* that has not as yet been fully recovered. In the Sinhala literature of Sri Lanka there is a commentary preserved which covers only the first 14 cantos and a part of the 15th in which Angada is shown as

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having gone as an ambassador to Ravana. It would appear from this commentary that the poem had originally 24 cantos and probably ended with the coronation of Rama after his return to Ayodhya.

The theme chosen by Kumaradasa is again a commonplace one, but he has been able to introduce freshness into its presentation. The poem begins with a description of Ayodhya. Then follows a description of the sports of Dasaratha with his wives in the gardens of his capital. The poet describes the rainy season and autumn and presents a happy scene in the process. In one canto he describes the love of Rama and Sita after their marriage, but here he is seen imitating the Kalidasa of *Kumārasambhava*. Kumaradasa was considerably influenced by the work of Kalidasa and this can be seen throughout his *Jānakīharaṇa*. But his work lacks the sweet simplicity of the poems of Kalidasa and the studied elegance and majesty of Bharavi.

In keeping with the trends of his times Kumaradasa delights in parading his scholarship. He has also shown skill in the use of the metre and has a good command over language and grammar, but the rather obvious display of his qualities creates an atmosphere of artificiality in his poem. His objective to imitate Kalidasa is admirable, but he is a victim of his artificiality, the accepted taste of his age.

Magha. Magha (Māgha, c. 700) deliberately imitates Bharavi. His *Śiśupālavadha-mahākāvya* in 20 cantos deals with the well-known incident in the Mahabharata where Śiśupāla, the haughty Chedi king, is killed by Krishna for reviling him. Magha glorifies Krishna; Bharavi, on the other hand, glorified Siva in his poem. Śiśupāla, a son of Krishna's aunt, took every opportunity to insult Krishna. Krishna, who had promised his aunt that he would tolerate a hundred offences of Śiśupāla's, did not, therefore, punish him. At the *Rājasūya* sacrifice of Yudhishthira, the highest honour is given to Krishna who has been all along a friend, philosopher and guide of the Pandavas. Śiśupala resents this choice and mounts a venomous attack on Krishna. But now that he had put up with a hundred offences by Śiśupāla, Krishna freed of his promise, decides to act. He releases his disc Sudarśana and beheads Śiśupāla with it.

This narrative has lost all its spirit and power in Magha's poem, as the poet is interested only in clever speeches on politics and morals and in long passages that reflect anger and glorification. His descriptions of Nature and love are closely modelled on those of Bharavi, but whereas Bharavi has used 16 metres in a canto, Magha has used 24. Bharavi describes the love-sports of the Gandharvas and the Apsaras; Magha describes with greater freedom the love-sports of the Yādavas and their beautiful women. Like Bharavi, Magha also constructs *citra-bandhas*. Considering all these similarities between *Śiśupālavadha* and Bharavi's *Kirātārjunīya*, many of which seem to have been deliberately attempted by Magha, the belief that he wrote to surpass and eclipse Bharavi would seem to contain a grain of truth.

Another traditional view is that Magha combines in himself all the qualities of the three greats in Sanskrit poetry: the excellence of the simile of Kalidasa, the depth of thought of Bharavi and the grace of words of Dandin. This view is obviously an overstatement. But the popular saying among Sanskrit students, 'navasargagate māghe navaśabdo na vidyate' (when one studies nine cantos of Magha there will be no new word to be known), shows the erudite nature of this poet. Magha is also known as ghaṇṭā māgha for his unique comparison of a hill having the rising sun and the setting moon on either side of it with an elephant having bells hanging on both sides. He introduces the word 'lakshmi' in the last verse of each canto and the poem is known as *lakṣmyaṅka* (bearing the sign lakshmi).

Magha's poem remains an exercise in literary art and not an expression of powerful emotions. It reflects the taste of the later times which regard Magha as a better poet than Kalidasa and Bharavi. This clearly indicates the great appeal he held for men of literature and the influence he had over the later writers of the *mahākāvyas*.

Later Mahākāvyas

In the later period, the *mahākāvya* came to be regarded as an ambitious project that would enable a poet to make a name for himself. With this view there cropped up an increase in artificiality and a tendency to display personal powers of scholarship and command over language and grammar. The unavoidable consequence of this was that poetic sensitivity suffered. Themes from available legends or the epics and puranas were chosen and elaborate poems built round them. Descriptions of nature, arguments on the art of politics and love-scenes delineated with full freedom were tiresomely repeated in these *mahākāvyas*. Poets took delight in constructing *citra-bandhas* of various types. The result of all this has been not great poetry, but an extensive exercise in literary art. It is possible that the conventions so firmly established and accepted were mainly responsible for this state of affairs. Be that as it may, in the compositions of this period there is industry, not poetry. It is neither an exaggeration nor an unjust condemnation to state that no really great *mahākāvya* was produced in the post-Magha era, though of such compositions there were several.

Haravijaya, by the Kashmiri Ratnākara (832–84[illegible]) contains 4,500 verses in its 50 cantos and deals with the killing of the demon Andhaka by Siva. In an extravagant manner are described politics, love-sports, the seasons, the *Tāṇḍava* dance of Siva and the Mandara mountain. No opportunity is lost to introduce matter that gives the poet a chance to show off his powers of description. There is a lack of taste and an absence of any sense of proportion in this work. The titles of the poet, 'vāgīśvara' and 'vidyāpati'

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aptly describe the poet's command over language and his sound learning, but they do not say anything of his ability to compose poetry.

Of similar type is the *Kapphaṇābhyudaya* of Śivasvāmin, another poet from Kashmir and a contemporary of Ratnakara. The poem narrates in 20 cantos the *Avadāna* story of King Kapphaṇa of Dakṣiṇāpatha who was miraculously converted to Buddhism after he had attacked King Prasenajit of Śrāvasti.

The *Śrikaṇṭhacarita* of Mankhaka (1135–45), yet another poet from Kashmir, also belongs to this school of *mahākāvyas*. The story of the destruction of the demon Tripura by Siva is told in its 20 cantos. There is no freshness, variety or lucidity of expression in it. The *Daśāvatāracarita* of Kshemendra (1100), the *Haracarita-cintāmaṇi* of Jayadratha (1300) and the *Kādambarī-kathāsāra* of Abhinanda (900) are other extensive poems dealing with epical and puranic themes and legends, but, strictly speaking, cannot be regarded as *mahākāvyas*.

The case of the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* or *Naiṣadha* by Sriharsha (Śrīharṣa, 1200) is, however, different. It has secured for itself a place of distinction and is included among the five most popular *mahākāvyas*. Its 22 cantos deal with the exquisite story of Nala and Damayantī from the Mahabharata. Sriharsha does not narrate the entire story; he ends it with the marriage of Nala and Damayanti and the entry of Kali into the capital of Nala. The Nala-Damayanti story is narrated in about 200 verses in the Mahabharata. It is one of the most enchanting episodes in the classic, having in it all the elements of romance and pathos. It is also narrated in a flowing manner. But Sriharsha is not interested in these aspects. He is more concerned with displaying his command over metres and words. He goes on using conceit after conceit and indulges in decorating his disproportionate descriptions. He has devoted five full cantos to describing the *svayaṁvara* of Damayanti. When the four gods, interested in winning the hand of Damayanti, and Nala himself, are presented to Damayanti, Sriharsha does not describe the anxieties or feelings of Nala or Damayanti, but uses this episode to compose verses with a twofold meaning, one applicable to a particular rival, the other to Nala. These verses, capable of several interpretations, are not intelligible without the help of a commentary.

There can be very little doubt about the scholarship of Sriharsha. It must also be admitted that his skill in rhetoric is considerable. But overdoing it spoils his style. His descriptions of Nature are often lifeless and unconvincing. The traditional judgement that an understanding of the *Naiṣadha* is a just reward of scholarship admirably sums up his achievement in the realm of poetry. He is perhaps the last of the greats.

Sriharsha was followed by authors of lesser quality who delighted in closely imitating the recognized masters of earlier times. Naturally their *mahākāvyas* have only the form of ambitious poems and can make no real claim to greatness as poetical compositions. The Nala legend is dealt with by Krishnananda (13th century) in his 15-canto poem *Sahṛdayānanda*. Vāmanabhaṭṭa Bāṇa (15th century) also writes of it in his *Nalābhyudaya*, a poem in 18 cantos. The *Jānakīpariṇaya* by Chakrakavi (17th century) describes the marriage of Sita and Rama. The *Harivilāsa* of Lolimbaraja (14th century) describes in 5 cantos the childhood of Krishna. The *Yādavābhyudaya* of Vedāntadeśika (13th century), the *Rukmiṇīkalyāṇa* by Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita (17th century) and the *Govindalīlāmṛta* by Krishnadasa Kaviraja (17th century) all describe the life of Krishna and the legend of Radha. The Siva legends are also handled enthusiastically. Gokula, also known as Utprekṣāvallabha (16th century), is the author of *Bhikṣāṭana*, a poem which describes the movements of the mendicant Siva and the reactions of the Apsaras at his approach. The *Śivalīlārṇava* by Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita (17th century) is a 20-canto poem dealing with the feats of Sundaranātha Siva of Madura. The *Gaṅgāvataraṇa* of Nilakantha describes the familiar incident of the descent of the sacred Ganges due to the efforts of Bhagīratha.

Like Magha, Bhatti too has been imitated by many poets who have written purely grammatical poems. The *Rāvaṇārjunīya* composed by Bhaṭṭabhīma also known as Bhaumaka (7th century), describes in 27 cantos the fight between Ravana and the Kārtavīryārjuna, but the purpose is obviously to illustrate the rules of Panini. Of a similar nature is the *Vāsudevavijaya* by Vasudeva (16th century) of Puruvana in Kerala. In it he discusses in 3 cantos the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* of Panini. The *Kumārapālacarita* of Jaina Hemachandra (11th century) also illustrates Sanskrit grammar in 20 cantos and Prakrit Grammar in 8 cantos.

Efforts have also been made to illustrate the figures of speech in poetical compositions. Nītivarman in his *Kīcakavadha*, a poem of 5 cantos, describes the thrilling episode of the slaying of Kīcaka by Bhima. The poem is uninspiring, but the clever use of the rhyme (*yamaka*) and puns (*śleṣa*) is admirable. The culmination of these tendencies is to be seen in such poems as the *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya* of Dhananjaya (10th century), and *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya* by Kaviraja (12th century), poems of 18 and 13 cantos respectively, which attempt to deal with the stories of Rama and the Pandavas simultaneously. Haradattasūri (18th century), in his poem *Rāghavanaiṣadhīya* attempts to combine the narration of the stories of Rama and Nala, while Someśvara, in his 9-canto poem *Pārvatīrukmiṇīya* narrates simultaneously the stories of the marriages of Siva and Parvati and Krishna and Rukmini. These literary feats evoke admiration by their display of the poets' command over language and grammar, but have little appeal as poetry.

The Jain poets too were not slow to perceive the potentialities of this form and composed several *mahākāvyas*. The *Varāṅgacarita* of Jatasimhanandi, the *Yaśodharācarita*

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of Vadirajasūri (14th century) and the *Triṣaṣṭiśalākapuruṣa-carita* of Hemachandra (11th century) may be mentioned in this context. All these compositions are *mahākāvyas* only in a technical sense. A steady degeneration of art and sensitivity, emotion and passion, made the productions poor compositions. They can in no way be compared with the works of Asvaghosha and Kalidasa of a much earlier period. That was the glorious age of the *mahākāvyas*.

Sandeśakāvyas

The *sandeśakāvyas* are also known as the *dūtakāvyas*. It is the *Meghadūta* of Kalidasa that set the pattern for this form. It is also likely that the inspiration for the two names, *sandeśa* and *dūta* also came from this poem. There were several imitative Sanskrit *sandeśakāvyas* of this superb poem and at least 50 of these can be definitely traced. Among them are the *Indudūta*, *Uddhavadūta*, *Kīradūta*, *Kokīlasandeśa*, *Cakorasandeśa*, *Candradūta*, *Cātakasandeśa*, *Cetodūta*, *Tulasīdūta*, *Pavanadūta*, *Pidūta*, *Bhṛṅgasandeśa*, *Bhramaradūta*, *Rathāṅgadūta*, *Viprasandeśa* and *Śukasandeśa*.

The *Meghadūta* has about 115 verses and is in the *mandākrāntā* metre. The story is very slender: a certain *yakṣa*, because of some fault on his part while in service, has been cursed by Kubera, his master, to remain in exile, separated from his wife, for one year. On the first day of the rainy month of *Āṣāḍha*, he sees a cloud resting on the top of the mountain where he is spending his exile. Sorely missing his young and talented wife, the *yakṣa* conceives the idea of getting the cloud to take his messages to his beloved, to cheer her up in far-off Alakā, the city of the *yakṣas*, in the Himalayas. With this slender theme, Kalidasa composed an immortal poem that contains exquisite music and superb descriptions of nature and landscapes.

The cloud floats from Ramagiri to Alaka and on the way visits many memorable places, crosses several rivers and rests on different mountains. All these are described in an incomparable manner by Kalidasa. As soon as the cloud reaches Alaka, the first part of the poem ends. Thereafter Kalidasa describes Alaka and the merry life of the wealthy *yakṣas*, their homes and their pleasures. He describes the wife of the exiled *yakṣa* and the message she receives. The picture of the wife has been drawn with rare skill and delicacy and is an immortal piece of Sanskrit lyrical poetry. Kalidasa has also described the lovesick condition of the *yakṣa* effectively. Kalidasa has the cloud with its beloved, Lightning (*Vidyut*), by its side, thus offering a contrast with the hero of the poem separated from his wife. The poem ends with the hero wishing that the cloud is never separated from its beloved. Kalidasa half-wins the battle for literary immortality by using the *mandākrāntā* metre for the entire poem. With it he has been able to give music to the poem and charm generations of lovers of Sanskrit poetry. Kalidasa's similes and generalizations only enhance the beauty of the poem. Nowhere are his puns and mythological allusions difficult to comprehend. The poet has succeeded in investing Nature with life and his descriptions in this respect are unsurpassed.

The success of the *Meghadūta* has been so great that it has become a part of the world's elegiac literature and is without a rival in its own class. It is this great popularity of the poem that made the Jaina poet of the 8th century, Jinasena, incorporate the whole of it in his own work, the *Pārśvābhyudaya*. The large number of commentaries which have been written on it and its several translations in almost all languages of the world, also indicate its popularity.

Among the earliest imitations of Kalidasa's work is the *Pavanadūta* of Dhoyī (12th century). Bhamaha (c. 600) has criticized poets for using inanimate objects, devoid of speech, such as a cloud, the wind, the moon, a bee, a parrot as messengers. This criticism on grounds of impropriety (*anaucitya*) suggests that between his time and Kalidasa's there had appeared several imitations of the *Meghadūta*, which forced him into this reaction.

The later imitations of the *Meghadūta* appear to have derived inspiration in matters of metre, theme, words and ideas from the original. It is only in regard to the messenger employed that there is a gradual change from inanimate objects to human beings, like Uddhava, and, finally, to abstract entities like *manas* and devotion (*bhakti*). Most of these poems develop the *vipralambha-śṛṅgāra* (love in separation) theme. There are, however, religious poems like the *Pārśvābhyudaya*, *Manodūta* and *Bhaktidūti* that develop the *śānta-rasa*. The Jaina poets have also used these messenger-poems as letters, especially from students to teachers.

The stories of Rama-Sita and of Radha-Krishna seem to have exercised a great influence on the later *dūtakāvyas*. Vaishnavism also provided some inspiration. But the *dūtakāvyas* came to be mainly used for religio-philosophical purposes by the Jaina poets. The pattern for this was set by the *Pārśvābhyudaya* of Jinasena in the 8th century. A great deal of artificiality was now introduced into these compositions, glaring examples of which are the *Śīlādūta*, *Cetodūta* and *Nemidūta*. The spontaneity, the ease and sweetness of the *Meghadūta* are absent here and in their place is a certain terseness and pedantry. To the Jaina poets goes the credit of introducing the *śānta-rasa* in the *dūtakāvyas*. The metres that have been used in these later *dūtakāvyas* include the *mandākrāntā* (that is best suited to this form), *mālini*, *śārdūlavikrīḍita* and *vasantatilakā*.

The *dūtakāvyas* are important from another point of view as well. They supply, to a certain extent, geographical information about the India of their times. Kalidasa describes accurately the long route from Ramagiri to Alaka. Dhoyi, in *Pavanadūta*, describes the route from the Malya mountain to Vijayanagar in Bengal. Vedantadesika (14th century), in *Haṁsasandeśa* sketches the path from the

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Mālyavat hill to Lanka. Lakshmidasa (14th century), in *Śukasandeśa*, lists the towns, temples, mountains and rivers between Ramesvaram and Guṇapura on the west coast. The *Indudūta* describes the passage from Jodhpur to Surat.

Praśastis

Along with the historical *kāvyas* are a number of *praśastis* written both in Prakrit and Sanskrit. They form a very important part of the history of the literary tradition of India.

The *praśasti-kāvyas*, panegyrical in character, were inspired by devotion and loyalty to and admiration for great royal patrons. The historical *praśastis*, primarily inscriptional records written in the *kāvya* form of prose and verse, are more than 15 in number and have been included in Fleet's *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*. As an illustration of the *praśasti* type of composition, reference could be made to the Girnar Inscription of Mahākṣatrapa Rudradāman (150) and to the Allahabad Pillar Inscription of Samudragupta, which is a composition by Harisena an official of his court. The high-flown and majestic Sanskrit prose of the inscription of Rudradaman observes all the rules of *alaṁkāra*. Here the king is described as capable of writing ornamented Sanskrit prose and verse, as knowing the conventions regarding words (*śabdasamaya*) and as being able to select words that are clear (*sphuṭa*), light (*laghu*), pleasant (*madhura*), varied (*citra*) and charming (*kānta*). Harisena in his *praśasti* of Samudragupta, vividly describes in 8 stanzas the death of Chandragupta I and the selection of Samudragupta by the dying king. The anxiety of the ministers before selection and their relief after it is made, the jealousy of the royal princes, their disappointment and the selection itself in the choice words, 'Come, protect the earth,' are all very skilfully done. These verses, remarkable for their simplicity, clarity, realism and sweetness, are good examples of what came to be later known as the *Vaidarbhī* style of composition. In later stanzas Harisena describes the young prince Samudragupta who leads the army to victory even while he is a child. The reader is also told of some of the new ruler's personal virtues. All these verses are followed by a very long prose sentence, full of compounds, describing the greatness of Samudragupta, the hero of many wars. This is perhaps the longest known compound in the Sanskrit language. Harisena uses all the devices at the disposal of a Sanskrit prose writer and reveals his knowledge of other Sanskrit texts, such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Long compounds are followed by very short words and phrases, perhaps to allow the reader to draw breath and the listener to catch the sense. The entire composition is rounded off by a verse that again invokes general blessings. Harisena, it is clear, goes after power (*ojas*) in his prose and after sweetness (*mādhurya*) and clarity (*prasāda*) in his verse. His composition is in the best manner of a Sanskrit *kāvya*.

Also remarkable is the inscription of Virasena, who was a minister of Chandragupta II. It too reveals an attempt to strive for literary effects. Equally interesting is the inscription of Vatsabhaṭṭi (473) which celebrates in 44 verses the consecration of a Sun-temple at Mandasor, ancient Dasapura. Some of the verses clearly indicate that Vatsabhaṭṭi modelled his verses on Kalidasa's. Kavīśvara Rāma (8th century) has composed two long *praśastis*. He is a poet of moderate ability, yet he has chosen to call himself 'kavīśvara', 'the lord of the poets'. Informing the reader that he is the author of the *praśasti*, he goes on to observe that the goddess Sarasvati herself dwelt in his mouth from the time he was a baby. The inscription of Lalitaśūradeva (9th century) is also remarkable for its poetical qualities. Paramardideva (1163–1203) is stated to have written a long *praśasti* of Siva, but in all likelihood the composition is the work of Vatsaraja, his minister. The authors of the *praśastis* often show their knowledge and study of Kalidasa's *Raghuvaṁśa*.

Praśastis are really full-fledged, ornate poems written in elaborate and different metres. They also contain prose that definitely is the precursor of the prose of Bana and Subandhu. They were very probably written to satisfy the desires of kings and rich men and are valuable because they provide information about the authors themselves, about other famous poets and about religious and temporal monuments. The form of a *praśasti* is fixed by convention. It usually starts with a benediction. This is followed by an account of the genealogy and praise of the king, or the patron, as the case may be. The third part is a description of the monument or the deed with which the poem is concerned, its purpose and a statement of the benefits and privileges going with it, if it is a gift. The *praśasti* concludes with an appeal for the preservation of the monument or the continuation of the benefits and the privileges bestowed on the party concerned. An account of the chief builder who built it, the priest who consecrated it, the poet who composed the *praśasti*, the scribe who inscribed it and, lastly its date, are also mentioned. The length of a *praśasti* varied from 10 to 12 to even a hundred or more stanzas.

These *praśastis* are important historical documents, but their importance from the point of view of literary history is equally great, for, through them, the continuity of the ancient Indian tradition of literature and poetics is firmly established.

Narrative Poetry

In Sanskrit narrative poetry one encounters a different world altogether. In ornate poetry or drama there is a certain sameness in theme and execution that leads to monotony. But here the same themes from the epics and the same characters, bold warriors and charming princesses

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or gentle kings and perfect queens of the classical drama, are not to be found. Instead, the reader catches up with another strata of society, the one of farmers and carpenters, salesmen and artisans, merchants and swindlers, selfish priests and hypocritical monks, greedy harlots and ruthless go-betweens. It is no exaggeration to say that the Sanskrit creative genius, free from the chains of conventions, is to be seen at its best in this poetry. It is no wonder that themes and characters from this poetry have proved popular in other countries as well.

The main purpose of this poetry seems to be to amuse and to instruct. The instruction may refer to religion or to worldly matters. In a sense, this poetry is light literature. It is clear that its stories have existed among the people long before they became part of literature. In Sanskrit, narrative poetry is a mixture of prose and verse, the term *kāvya* includes both prose as well as poetry. These poetical pieces resemble, in some aspects, the *ākhyānas* and one is tempted to seek the origins of this poetry in the *ākhyānas* preserved in earlier literature. But such an attempt does not seem to be a move in the right direction; for, it appears more than likely that the tales narrated in this poetry did not come from *itihāsa*, *ākhyāna* and purana. These stories belong to the masses and were preserved by them.

These narrative tales, by their content and purpose, divide themselves into convenient groups: stories meant for spiritual and worldly objectives; stories for carrying out religious propaganda; stories for the avowed purpose of teaching politics and worldy wisdom; and stories meant for pure entertainment and fun. The practice of including stories within stories appears to have been a favourite technique of the writers of narrative literature. It is for this reason that the *Bṛhatkathā* of Guṇāḍhya, the *Daśakumāracarita* of Dandin and the *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* of Bana are regarded as part of this narrative literature. The familiar words, *ākhyāyikā* and *kathā* represent the two types of narratives, the *ākhyāyikā* representing the smaller narrative and the *kathā* representing a conversational form. Patanjali informs us that there were three *ākhyāyikās* written before his work: *Vāsavadattā*, *Sumanottarā* and *Bhaimarathī*. Bana observes that his *Harṣacarita* is an *ākhyāyikā* and the *Kādambarī* is a *kathā*. Bhamaha and Dandin seem to hold divergent views about the real difference between these two forms. Kshemendra holds that *kathā* is the principal narrative and *ākhyāyikā* the intercalated story.

The *Bṛhatkathā* of Gunadhya (Guṇāḍhya) is a typical example of the type of poetry that is being discussed here. Dandin, Bana and Subandhu all clearly show that by about the 5th century there already existed a treasure-house of narrative literature in the Paiśācī language. This was called the *Bṛhatkathā* by Gunadhya. This work is, unfortunately, no longer available and only a very tentative idea can be formed about it from the information supplied by later literature derived from it.

This *Bṛhatkathā* has been preserved by Budhasvāmin (5th century) in his *Bṛhatkathā-ślokasaṁgraha*, by Kshemendra (1037) in his *Bṛhatkathā-mañjarī* and by Somadeva (c. 1063) in his *Kathāsaritsāgara*. A critical, comparative study of the three works reveal the essence of the original *Bṛhatkathā* and also that it is Budhasvāmin who is more faithful to the original work. Budhasvāmin praises Greek art and artists. This reference might be to the famous Gandhara art. If this be correct, the date of Gunadhya may well be the 1st century A.D. Budhasvāmin has a fine sense of humour and reveals a gay and joyous outlook on life which makes his work appealing. Religious festivals and *yātrās*, manners and customs of people, lives of religious and worldly men, artists and harlots are all described with rare realism and in a gay spirit. The name *Ślokasaṁgraha* itself suggests that it is a summary of a much bigger work of Gunadhya.

Kshemendra wrote his *Bṛhatkathā* in about 1037. As a voluminous writer, he does not appear to have applied his mind seriously to the task of artistic selection and attractive narration. He has left gaps in the abridgement so that important links are often missing and the stories become unintelligible. He reveals his inferior taste by describing erotic scenes as well as religious life in a manner that indicates he has lost all sense of proportion.

Somadeva wrote his *Kathāsaritsāgara* some time between 1063 and 1081. Somadeva and Kshemendra are both Kashmiris. Since they wrote within a period of about 40 years of each other, it is likely that they both go back to a common recension of the *Bṛhatkathā* that was very popular in Kashmir. The *Kathāsaritsāgara* is literally 'an ocean of stories'. The work is an excellent example of popular poetry; its language is ornate but never difficult. Metres have been skilfully handled and the figures of speech used are the pun and simile. Somadeva's qualities as a poet have raised his work to a higher level that than of Kshemendra and Budhasvāmin. If there is defective arrangement in the intercalation of stories and if, in the process of narration, the hero Naravāhanadatta loses much of his grandeur, these defects have possibly been inherited from the original work of Gunadhya himself. There is a certain predestination in the stories that makes the narrative lose colour and interest. The Udayana stories are valuable, for they show some variations from those that occur in the Buddhist works. Here are well over 400 stories that reveal a fascinating world of wizards and witches, gods and demons. Love and dreams, ship-wrecks and rescues, and descriptions of places at the bottom of the sea, all make the stories enjoyable. Stories of knaves and fools are introduced for the sole purpose of inducing laughter and fun. In this connection, reference should be made to the stories about Muladeva, the rogue, and his son, a master-rascal. All the cunning, selfishness and fraudulent wit of human life stand here unmasked. The stories of women present a wide variety of character. Wicked and unfaithful wives, chaste women devoted to religion

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family and women under evil influence are all presented here with a remarkable realism. The cults of Siva and Gauri, Parvati or Durga, appear to be popular, though other cults are also referred to. The style of the narrative is simple and flexible but is at times ornate, when the occasion requires it. Simple figures of speech, like the pun and simile, adorn the narrative and enliven it.

The *Vetālapañcaviṁśatī* popularly known as 'The Tales of Vikrama and the Vampire', consists of 25 stories narrated by the Vampire to Vikrama who seeks his assistance in securing the throne. In these stories, several riddles are put to the king and when he satisfactorily solves them, he wins the assistance of the Vampire. The background is obviously Tantric lore. There is another collection of tales also centering on Vikrama; these are called the *Siṁhāsana-dvātriṁśikā*. The throne of Vikrama is reached by 32 steps, on each of which a doll is fixed. As King Bhoja tries to mount the throne by climbing the steps, each one of the dolls takes a turn each night and narrates a story. The *Vikramodaya*, *Mādhavānala-kāmakandalā-kathā* by Ananda and the *Pañcadaṇḍacchatra-prabandha* narrate stories about the legendary king Vikrama, describing his valour, greatness, sagacity and generosity. The *Vīracaritra* of Ananta and Sivadasa's *Śālivāhana-kathā* describe the heroic deeds of King Śālivāhana and his son Śaktikumāra. The *Bharaṭakāḍ-vātriṁśikā* contains 32 stories which ridicule the priests and monks by exposing their follies and wickedness. The *Dhūrtākhyāna* by Haribhadra severely criticizes and ridicules the stories from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana by revealing their absurdities and exaggerations. The wit exhibited there is admirable. The *Kathārṇava* of Sivadasa is a collection of stories about fools and thieves. The *Bhoja-prabandha* is an interesting collection of stories but has no historical value at all.

Among ornate narratives, the *Daśakumāracarita* (The Story of the Ten Princes), by Dandin is an important work. It is a series of tales set in a common framework and narrated in the style of ornate poetry. Scholars differ as to whether it is 'knave fiction', 'moral fiction' or 'political fiction'. In truth, it is something of all these, but is primarily light literature meant to entertain. Ten princes assemble at the forest-court of a deposed king and each narrates a remarkable adventure. The narrators recount instances of knavery and describe the activities of scoundrels and rogues. There is an element of strong eroticism as well of predestination running through the narrative. The superb sense of humour of the author is to be seen in the story of the sage Marici, who is completely fooled by the cunning of the harlot Kāmamañjarī. Like his contemporaries who wrote ornate epics, Dandin too has shown his mastery over language and vocabulary by writing the whole of the 7th section without using any labial sound. His reason for this is that his narrator here, Mantragupta, has been hurt on his lips by his beloved during their love-play. The *Daśakumāracarita* is also of great importance from the point of view of the culutral history of early India. The world described here is rarely met in what is known as classical literature. The ball dance of a princess, the cock-fights, harlots and their guiles, gamblers and thieves are all described with insight and convincing realism. The work is incomplete and the first part, the 'Pūrvapīṭhikā', seems to have been written by a later writer, for it lacks the graceful diction (*padalālitya*) Dandin is famous for.

The *Vāsavadattā* of Subandhu is a prose narrative that deals with the dream-based love of Vasavadatta and Kandarpaketu. There is no substance to the story which is narrated in a clumsy and laboured, though scholarly, manner. Subandhu is guilty of high poetical conceits, he has boasted of achieving a pun with every word, which should explain his aim in writing this work.

The *Harṣacarita* and *Kādambarī* are justly regarded as the crowning achievements of Sanskrit prose and fiction. The *Harṣacarita* is not history but is more a historical novel, while *Kādambarī* is pure fiction. In the *Harṣacarita*, the pictures of personalities and of Nature are drawn with great ability. King Harshavardhana, his brother and his sister Rajyasri stand out as rare portraits in Sanskrit fiction. The political intrigues are also faithfully reported. Despite all this, this work cannot be regarded as a historical account of the time of Harshavardhana, for the emphasis is on a narrative in which poetic fancy and imagination have been given greater importance than facts.

Kādambarī, on the other hand, is a purely fanciful tale of a romance that extends over the different births of the hero and the heroine. The setting of the story is in the Himalayas, where the human world and the world of marvels unite. The intercalated stories tax the reader's memory as he goes through the entire work, but the characters of Candrāpīḍa, Kādambarī and Mahāśvetā stand out as masterpieces of Bana. The advice given by Śukanāsa to the young prince Candrāpīḍa and the message from Kādambarī to her lover are memorable passages. It is in his descriptions that Bana excels all others. The Vindhya forest, the Acchoda lake, the royal palace and its entrance gate, the horse Indrāyudha, the sage Jābāli, Mahāśvetā and Kādambarī are all delineated by a great master. Bana's sense of colour and detail is superb as is his command over language. If, in his descriptions Bana is majestic and impressive, in his dialogues and soliloquies he is extremely lyrical and appealing. The allusions in his writings reveal a close acquaintance with mythology, history, literature and philosophy. The religious lives of the Saivas and the Buddhas are cleverly drawn. Because of its social allusions, *Kādambarī* is an important document of the social history of the times.

The *Kādambarī* of Bana deservedly became very popular and naturally invited imitation. Jain writers especially have freely imitated this form while preaching the Jaina view of life.

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A reference here should be made to a peculiar form of narrative in Sanskrit, the *campū*, which is prose and verse mixed. There is a certain repetition to be seen in the prose and verse portions of *campū* and the quality of the narrative is also not particularly impressive. Historically speaking, the form is old, for it has been used by Harisena in his Allahabad Pillar *praśasti* (345). The *Nalacampū* of Trivikramabhaṭṭa, the *Rāmāyaṇacampū* of Bhoja and Lakṣmaṇabhaṭṭa and the *Bhāratacampū* of Ananta are noteworthy early works. The *Pārijātaharaṇacampū*, the *Mandāramarandacampū* and the *Svāhāsudhākaracampū* are compositions of the 18th century. But no work is really inspiring or pleasing, for the *campū* is an insipid form of Sanskrit narration.

Śatakas, Pañcāśikas, Kośas, etc. Any discussion of 'traditional poetry' in Sanskrit would be incomplete without an account of the excellent lyrical poetry and the collections of beautiful stray verses that go under the name *Śatakas*, *Pañcāśikas*, *Kośas* or *Saṁgrahas*. Sanskrit poets have always shown an uncommon skill in painting a full picture in a verse of just four lines. Collections of such verses reveal craftsmanship of the highest order as well as a sincerity of emotion that is very appealing. The *śatakas* of Amaru (earlier than 650) and Bhartṛhari (650) have made them immortal. Jayadeva's (1206) *Gīta Govinda* and Jagannatha Pandita's (1628) *Bhāminīvilāsa* are lyrical poetry of a very high order and quality.

This is mainly erotic poetry of a subtle and suggestive order. There is an ease and naturalness about this poetry which is matched by its delicacy. Here is no desire to sing of the joys and sorrows of human life or to look at human life in a very serious manner. This is the poetry of youthful, impassioned love and the various pleasing aspects of this love—longing, hope, ecstacy, jealousy, anger, disappointment, despair, reconciliation and fruition—are all cleverly delineated in it. These different pictures have been consummately drawn in the space of four-line verses and bear a striking closeness to life and reality. The pathos is tender, and playful aspects of love are cultured and delightful.

If Amaru sings of the joys of love, Bhartṛhari sings of its sad emptiness. His three *śatakas*, the *Nīti*, *Śṛṅgāra* and *Vairāgya*, reveal a mind that wavers between the attractive enjoyments of life and a wistful renunciation of the same. Bhartṛhari is sick of the world which is crude, crooked and uncultured; love to him is hollow. His is a haughty mind which cannot live in harmony with the world as it is. Bhartṛhari might lack the warmth of Amaru, but there is no doubt about his greatness as a literary artist. In Jagannatha Pandita's work there is much artificiality but there is also a certain ring of sincerity that makes his *Vilāsas* appealing. He has a fine command over language as well as a fine sense of music, but he has neither the warmth and exuberance of Amaru nor the seriousness of Bhartṛhari.

Bana, Mayūra and others have used the *śataka* form to write in praise of their deities. But the *Caṇḍīśataka* of Bana and the *Śūryaśataka* of Mayura cannot be taken as admirable examples of devotional poetry. Their artificiality drowns the emotional element. The Bauddha and Jaina imitations also have little poetical value.

In the *Caurapañcāśika* by Bilhana, the hero, while being taken to the gallows, remembers the beauty of his beloved and his stolen love trysts with her. His intoxicating experiences and the pathos of the situation are conveyed in the *vasantatilakā* metre.

Damodara and Kshemendra have written satirical and humorous poetry; the former is known for his *Kuṭṭanimata*, the latter for his *Samayamātṛka*, *Kalāvilāsa*, *Darpadalana*, etc. all of which employ humour and satire to criticise contemporary life. There is a certain modernity and intellectual element in the humour and satire of Kshemendra. The medicine man more skilled in ending than in saving life, the roguish goldsmith, the astrologer who knows the mind of his clients better than he understands the stars, and the greedy corrupt government officials, receive their due at Kshemendra's hands and are effectively presented.

It would but be proper to conclude with a reference to the *Gīta Govinda* of Jayadeva, perhaps the internationally best known contribution to Sanskrit lyrical poetry. In this unique poem, love and devotion have been blended together with a rare sensitivity and skill. It is difficult to say whether this is pastoral or musical drama, but it certainly falls between song and drama. Every song has been given a *rāga* and *tāḷa* by the poet himself and the sweetness is unparalleled. Beginning with Radha's sullenness and disappointment at Krishna's behaviour, the poem ends with their union. The story is very slight, but the revelation of the intense love between Krishna and Radha and of the deep personal devotion of the poet to Krishna has bestowed immortality on the poem. The poem captivates the mind and ear alike by its charm and music. Jayadeva is the prince of the great lyricists of Sanskrit poetry.

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Sindhi

D. K. MANSHARAMANI

Introduction

It is tragic that there are no records of the songs that danced on the lips of the Sindhis during the generations before the conquest of Sind by the Arabs (A.D. 711). The civilization of Sind was then at its peak and many a great poet must have composed verses which were sung throughout the length and breadth of the land, but alas! the echoes of these songs have not lingered.

It is very likely that the records of that poetry were deliberately destroyed or perished during the holocaust. Even the Arab scholars and travellers who had visited Sind from time to time after the conquest are silent about the early traditional poetry of Sind. Indifference on the part of the Sindhis, a lack of enthusiasm for preserving their own traditions, culture and literature and their preference for the language and literature of the conquerors might also be the causes for this absence of a record.

Earliest Sindhi Poetry

Recent researches have revealed that the earliest specimen of Sindhi poetry still surviving is to be found in a laudatory verse quoted by Imām Hāfiz Abū Hātim Albustī (?–965) in his Arabic work *Rauzatul Uqalā Va Nuzhatul Fuzalā* (Garden of the Intelligent and Pleasure of the Learned) and reproduced in a Persian work entitled *Mujmilatul Tavārīkh Va Alqisas* (Compendium of History and Stories). Unfortunately the verse has defied deciphering, though its meaning in Arabic is available. The date of its composition is judged to be A.D. 801.

It must therefore be presumed that Sindhi literature, especially poetry, began to flower during the Sūmrās Era (1050–1350), when native chieftains wrested power from the Arabs. It is during this time that local romantic tales became the basis of Sindhi poetry. These tales which contributed the raw material for the later development of Sindhi poetry were eight in number. Subsequently, four more tales were popularized by *charanas* (bards), who sang them to the people. These early poems, called *Gāhūn*, were never recorded but were handed down by word of mouth.

There are also a few verses called *Gnān* by Pīr Sadruddin (1290–1409), an Ismaili missionary (see G. A. Allana 'Sūmaran je. daur jī Sindhī Shāirī', *Mihran*, vol. IX, 1960). They are mostly religious in content and hence it would be correct to say that he is the pioneer of Sindhi religious poetry. His son, Pīr Hasan Kabīruddīn (1341–1449) is also credited with the composition of *Gnāns*, but the language of the extant poems cannot be termed Sindhi in its totality.

The Sammas and Sindhi Poetry. During the Samma rule (1350–1520), (the successors of the Sumras), the seven trunkless heads of the Sāmūī Faqīrs (or Māmūīs) are said to have uttered seven riddles in Sindhi. These have been preserved and translated into English verse by Richard Burton in his *Scinde or the Unhappy Valley*. It would appear that these verses are more apocryphal than authentic. They very likely belong to a later period.

According to Daudpota, 'verses of many poets such as Shaikh Bhirio, Ishāq Āhinger, Darvīsh Rājo, Kāmil Majzūb and others belonging to this period have disappeared, with the single exception of one couplet of Ishāq which has a fine conceit (U. M. Daudpota, *Survey of Sindhi Literature*, Karachi, 1954):

He would fain be a cocksparrow and sit in the winnowing scoop of his love.
So that he might hear her sweet caressing words.
(tr. U.M. Daudpota)

Stray poems in *bait* (couplet) form by some other poets of this period, that were once believed to have been lost, have now been traced.

Sufistic Poetry

The first great Sufi poet of Sind is Qazi Qazan (Qāzī Qāzan or Qādan, c. 1465–1551). His seven verses have been preserved for posterity in *Bayānul Ārifīn* (Description of Mystics, 1630) and are described as bright stars of Sindhi literature. (Thakur Hiro, in his *Qazi Qādan Jo Kalām*, gives 112 verses, of which all may not be authentic.) Qazi Qazan was a contemporary of Surdas (1450–1575), Guru Nanak (1469–1538) and Mira (1504–1546). Kabir (1398–1494), the chief exponent of *Nirguṇa Kāvya* in Hindi and an outstanding *Bhakta Kavi*, was his senior contemporary.

From Qazi Qazan's poems discovered recently it is evident that this Sufi poet must have been influenced by the *Bhakti Kāvya* movement of North India. *Jogīs* (*Yogīs*) and their ways of life and customs are commonly referred to by *Bhakta Kavis*. It is said that *Jogīs* used to wander throughout India, including Sind. Reference to *Jogī* in the following poem is symbolic:

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The *Jogī* woke me up from mental stupor,
Thereafter I moved on to Pilgrim's Path.
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

Mark his mystical thoughts:

O young man! Awake and behold; All is in your eye!
Both Mecca as well as Multan are within.
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

And again:

Some who are near are yet distant
and those who are far off appear to be near and dear.
The frogs living in a pond know not
about blossoming lotuses therein.
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

Qazi Qazan was the greatest scholar of his time. He was a profound mystic who was conversant with both Islamic theosophy and Hindu thought. It would appear that he pioneered a synthesis of Sufism and Vedantism and was instrumental in interpreting the main doctrine of Pantheism (*Vahdatul Vujūd*) enunciated by Ibn Arabi, the well-known Sufi of Arabia.

Second only to Qazi Qazan is Shah Karīm of Bulrī (1537–1623), who in his *Malfūzāt* (Sermons) quoted Qazi Qazan's poems and thus became the first to preserve these purest gems of Sindhi poetry. Karīm is often called the 'Morning Star' of Sindhi poetry. His verses are imbued with mystic thought and are tinged with an imagery that is purely indigenous. In the words of Daudpota, 'Their scope and subject matter are no doubt limited, but they are an intensive expression of a fervid soul.... Rough and rugged they are, (but) they are not without feeling and intrinsic beauty' (U. M. Daudpota, *Survey of Sindhi Literature*, 1954).

Karīm's verses, like his predecessor's, are replete with pantheistic thoughts:

He is Himself the King and He Himself is the Messenger,
He Himself finds Himself and realizes self.
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

And again:

He is here, He is there,
He abides in my mind,
In His own light,
He beholds Himself. (tr. Motilal Jotwani)

Shah Karīm's verses are terse and pithy. They are also full of mystical import and moral ideas.

Islamic and Hindu Fusion. The *Advaita* and *Vahdatul Vujūd* (Pantheism) of the Sufis were nowhere brought closer together than in Sindhi poetry by the Sindhi Muslim poets.

'Sindhi Poetry is Sufistic, free from sectarianism and surcharged with the consciousness of the presence of One in the Many' (L. H. Ajwani, 'Sindhi Literature', in *Contemporary Indian Literature*, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1959, p. 256).

Lutf Allāh Qādrī (1611–79), who picked up the threads left by his predecessors, handed over the legacy to later poets such as Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Sachal Sarmast, Rohal, Murad, Dalpat and Bedil. He is the first Sindhi poet to quote Arabic verses from the Qurān in his *bait*. He also introduced many new words from Arabic which were not in vogue till then.

Qazi Qazan has referred to *Jogīs* in only one *bait*, but Qadrī has composed several verses on *Jogīs* and *Sāmis* (gurus) and makes reference to *Jogis* of such far off places as Bengal, Banaras, Hinglaj and so on. He even talks about *Jogis* going to Malabar, which shows that there has been contact between Sindh and the Malabar coast for generations. He says:

Some to Kanoj repair or some visit Mathura,
Some run towards Deccan and some go to Malivār
(Malabar).
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

He has composed around 50 *baits* dealing with the sufistic doctrine of pantheism. Here is an example of this poetry:

He is the cup-bearer, the cypress, the successor and the cup.
He pours wine, He drinks it and He is Himself the intoxicated....
He is the Singer, Song and He is the Composer.
(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

Another major poet, Miyūn Ṣāh Ināt (c. 1625-171[illegible]) 'was a classical poet in as much as he used the classical idiom and employed the classical form of Sindhi *bait* and [illegible] (a type of ballad) or *kāfī* in his poetry, yet he heralded a new era in the domain of Sindhi poetry....' (N. A. Baloch, *Poetry of Shah Inat*, Adabi Board, Hyderabad, 1963).

Like his predecessor he sings of Hindu *Jogis* and, in [illegible] *Surud Ramkali* (poem based on *rāgiṇi/rāga* Ramkali) makes references to their pilgrimages to Jagannath (Puri), Hinglaj, Konkan and even Malivār (Malabar). He names Gorakhnāth and Vīrnāth as the exponents of this cult. He is the first poet to compose poems based on the traditional tales of Sind, as was the wont of *Bhakta Kavis* or *Prem Mārgis* (realizing God through the path of love) elsewhere in India. He is also the first to compose *Vāi* (a poetic genre) in Sindhi.

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The Premier Poet. Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai (Shāh Abdul Latīf Bhiṭāī, 1689–1752), the premier poet of Sindh, is the last of the great medieval poets. His collection of poems, *Rasālo* (Message, 1866) is undoubtedly the repository of the best Sindhi thought evincing great poetic skill.

Indeed, in the words of the great Sindhi scholar Gurbaxani, 'Shah possesses all the characteristics required of a great poet' (H.M. Gurbaxani, *Ṣāh Jo Rasālo*, vol. I, Karachi, 1922, p. 75). Almost all the native critics and European savants, who have studied his *Rasālo* in the original, rank him amongst the great poets of the world.

Shah's claim to immortality is not on account of the themes he chose but rather the technique he adopted in communicating his views and observations on love—mundane and divine; the life of the common people, be they farmers or fisher-folk, spinners or weavers; the bards, the landless, etc. and the way he describes their sufferings and joys. He provides varied fare in his poetry, so that all who read it, or hear it sung, appreciate the beauty of thought and the music of his verse. He is at ease when he interprets pantheistic thought and is at his best when he composes verses celebrating love. He can well be compared to Wordsworth when he portrays Nature. He does not shun writing poems with a tinge of humour and keeps a sense of perspective when praising worthy chieftains. His poetry is allegorical and most of his story-based poems have an undercurrent of spirituality.

Here are a few representative selections from his verse. Readers not familiar with his work will be able to get some idea from them of the sweetness and sadness of his songs, the beauty of imagery, the poetic fancies and uniqueness of both language and style. He sings, like a Sufi, of mystical thought in the following verse:

Call him not a Lover nor a Beloved either,
Call him not creator, not created either,
From Unity there was Diversity,
From Diversity, Unity
The Divine Truth is One
Err not with other speech.

(tr. M. M. Gidwani)

His universalism can be judged from the following verse:

On my Sindh aye shed water, Lord,
And Plenty, Mercy's Self, accord,
Make this whole world burgeon with,
Thy grace of rainy deeds.

(tr. H. T. Sorley)

He can teach a lesson even from the smallest, most insignificant thing, such as a needle:

Oh Friends! I cannot consider
Kingship equal in value to a needle,
It covers the naked but itself remains nude.

(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

Mark the poet's patriotic feelings:

While looking out for my village if I die here,
O Sumra (king's dynasty), have my tomb
where my people are.
And burn incense of the weeds and
Creepers that grow in my native place,
Though dead I will rise again,
If my dead body is sent to Malīr (name of a village)

(tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

There are, along with Shah Abdul Latif, two other poets, Sachal Sarmast (Sachal the Inebriated, 1739–1826) and Sami (1743–1850) who constitute the Trimurti of Sindh poetry. Sachal has been called the Poet of Revolt, even like Shelley in English literature. He rebels against orthodoxy and goes so far as to utter blasphemies, using the strongest language against the clergy. He disdains dogmas and is up in arms against the cant and hypocrisy of the so-called pious. In this respect he is far ahead of even the great Perisan lyricist Hāfiz Shīrāzī with whom he is generally compared. Here is a typical *kāfī* (ballad) by him:

Some say this, and some say that.
I am what I am.
Some call me Momin (the faithful)
and some Kāfir (the Unbeliever),
Some term me an ignoramus
and some as self-evident.
Some term me a magician,
Some call me a poet. I am what I am.
Some call me a man and some call me
verily a devil!
Some call me great and some
a maniac. I am what I am.

(tr. L. H. Ajwani)

He was for truth under any conditions as may be seen in this verse:

Brave men speak truth,
Let others like it or not;
For the talk of falsehood friendship we care not,
God Himself created truth.
Mansur (name of a Sufi) procalimed
Truth and was sent to the gallows
Let others bear such loads of love or not

(tr. Jethmal Gulrajani)

Vedantists. Rōhal (pen name, 1734–1804) was mainly a Hindi poet, but he also made a mark as a poet writing in

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Sindhi. He is a *Gyān-Mārgi* poet. His most popular poem reads:

Both in Islam and Heresy the adherants pursue divergent paths,
On one side are Hindus and on the other Muslims,
And in between is a wall of hatred
The blind can't dispel darkness and won't know the Truth.
O Rohal! When we saw Beloved's Path
We saw He alone is in all things
In what direction can one who sleeps in the
Holy Kaba (House of God) turn his feet, but towards Him? (tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

Following in Rohal's footsteps were Murād (1743–1796) Shāhū, Ghulām Alī and Daryākhān (19th century).

Amongst the Vedantist poets Chainrai Sami (Cainrāi Sāmī, 1743–1850) is the most important. He has interpreted the *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Yoga Darśan*, *Brahm Sūtras*, and Upanishads in his *ślokās*. Being a *Bhakta Kavi* he has referred to saints and such poets as Raidas, Kabir, Dodu Dayal and others.

Sami appeals to all because of the melodiousness, simplicity and serenity of his verse. He sustains the reader's interest throughout, even though he tends to repeat ideas again and again. There is some ineffable charm in the manner in which he puts his thoughts across, and then keeps the reader enraptured with even abstruse topics.

In one of his *ślokās* he writes:

Sami! In this house there is another dwelling,
And within the dwelling is another residence,
In that residence is He that is Houseless,
Unreached by senses, speech and mind.
Pure, indefinable, ever serene. (tr. L. H. Ajwani)

Dalpat (1769–1841) was both a Sufi and a Vedantist and belonged to the *Gyān-Mārgi* School of Poets who preached love for their fellow beings. He was the foremost protagonist of communal harmony, as may be seen in this verse:

Is God in *pīpul* tree different from the one in *babul* tree?
If *Kāba* is the House of Allah (God),
then what wrong is committed by the
Idol Temple to be left high and dry by Him?
The same light burns in both mosque as well as infidel's monastery.
O Dalpat! Whence has this discord developed in the people? (tr. D. K. Mansharamani)

The last but not the least important of the Sufi poets is Abdul Qāder Bedil (1814–1872), who has enriched traditional Sindhi poetry with his ballads and *dohās*. He, too, has referred in his poems to *Jogīs* and the mythological heroes of India side by side with those in Islamic lore.

Religious Poetry. The need for religious poetry in Sindhi arose when it became necessary to explain the basic tenets of Islam to new converts not familiar with Arabic. This type of religious poetry was composed by many and was called *Kabit*, or, sometimes *Sindhi*, as it was written in Sindhi.

Makhdum Abul Hasan Thatwi (Makhdūm Abul Hasan Thaṭvī, 1661–c.1700) was the first to write such a work. It was called *Abul Hasan Ji Sindhi* ('Sindhi' of Abul Hasan Ji, 1700). In it, the poet gives explanations for *Namāz* (Prayers) and *Vūzū* (Ablutions). He was followed by several poets who wrote either *Kabit* or *Sindhi*. Prominent among them were Makhdum Muhamed Hashim (Makhdūm Muhamed Hāshim, 1690–1760), Makhdum Abdullah (Makhdūm Abdullāh, ?–1763), Makhdum Ziauddin (Makhdūm Ziāuddīn, 1679–1757) and Makhdum Girhori (Makhdūm Girhori, 1739–1778).

There are no records of religious poetry being composed by either Hindus or Christians from earliest times down to 1875.

Religious Influences. The dominant religious influence on the life and literature of the people of Sind was that of Islam as the majority community in Sind professed Islam. Before the conquest of Sind by the British (1843) there was less religious freedom and hence any other influence but that of Islam is not traceable in literature. There is no influence left of Jainism and Buddhism from the time Sind was invaded by the Arabs.

Influence of Sanskrit

The direct influence of Sanskrit poetry on Sindhi poetry is discernible only in Sami's *Sāmī Ja Saloka* (Slokas of Sami). It is to be found to some extent in the works of Muslim poets like Rohal and Ghulam Ali who wrote mostly in Hindi. The reason is that the majority of the population being Muslims, they turned to Islam and Arabic or Persian. There is no Hindu poet in Sind prior to Sami. The influence of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana on the life and literature of the Sindhis during this period is negligible.

Influences of Foreign Languages

Among foreign languages that have influenced Sindhi traditional poetry, Persian has had the most extensive influence, from the point of view of vocabulary, poetic imagery and thought. It was through the works of the great mystical poets of Persia, such as Jalaluddin Rumi and Fariduddin Attar, that Sufism influenced the writings of such Sindhi poets as Shah Abdul Latif and Sachal Sarmast

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Arabic poetry hardly influenced Sindhi poetry, except that some poets have used Arabic verses from the Holy Quran.

Poetical Genres in Sindhi

Bait or Dohā. The earliest poetical genre extant, *Gāh* (literally sing. thou—a short two hemistich verse), developed into the most popular form of poetry between the early period and 1875. It came to be called *Bait* (couplets), which is nothing but the *Dohā* or *Sortho* of Hindi poetics. Sindhi poets have used this genre for all types of poetry—philosophic, mystical, didactic, lyrical, laudatory, romantic, etc. Its popularity waned during the British period, but since Independence it has again gained momentum.

Vāī-Kāfī. The latest research shows that *Kāfī*, based on Indian *rāgā* was in vogue before *Vāī* was introduced in Sindhi. Scholars have striven to discover the etymology of both these nearly similar genres, but have not been successful. Both are lyrical in nature and are meant to be sung to the accompaniment of the *yaktaro* (one-stringed musical instrument) and the *maṭko* (earthen jar) used as *tabla*. Shah Inat and Shah Abdul Latif are the chief exponents of this poetic form (*Vāī*).

Vāī is now extinct, but *Kāfī* has been composed by many a great poet down to the present day. The finest *Kāfīs* are by Sachal Sarmast and Abdul Qader Bedil.

Other popular forms, such as *Ghazal*, *Rubai* (quatrain) and *Qita* (fragment), have been borrowed from Persian prosody at a later stage.

In recent times there have been further innovations, with poets borrowing new forms from foreign languages and sister languages in India.

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Tamil

M. ARUNACHALAM

Introduction

Tamil is a classical language of India with a rich legacy of poetry going 2500 years back. All original writing in the language was in poetry, till the introduction of printing in the 17th–18th centuries. Not only creative writing, but even books on the science of astrology, medicine, architecture and town-planning, and the arts of music, dance and painting were written in verse.

The commentaries of grammatical treatises and epic poetry mention three ancient academies of Tamil men of letters which produced a vast volume of poetic writing. There are detailed accounts of the Pandya (Pāṇḍiya) kings who patronized the academies, the number of poets and the

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names of the works written by them. The First Academy was at South Madurai, a legendary place far south of the modern Kanyakumari. When this city was submerged by the seas, the Second Academy was established to the north of it, at a place called Kapatapuram, which is mentioned by Valmiki in his Ramayana. When this again was washed away by the sea, the Third Academy was founded at the present city of Madurai.

Each of these academies produced a large number of works in verse on grammar and general literature, music and dance, but the books of the first two academies have all been lost, except for the *Tolkāppiyam* of the Second Academy, which had set the standards for the language and its literary composition for the Second as well as the Third Academies. All, barring two books, of the Third Academy are available and are called by the general name 'Sangham' (Saṅgam, Caṅgam) Poetry.

Bharatam, a treatise on *Nāṭakat-tamil* (dance and drama), is mentioned as one of the books lost. Several books on music and dance have, it is stated, also been lost. All this lends weight to the claim that ancient classical Tamil was divided into *iyal* (poetry), *iśai* (music) and *nāṭakam* (dance and drama).

In Tamil all poetry was with a purpose. Where poetry was not dedicated to God, it was, in a sense, dedicated to man: it was ethical writing, didactic in nature, intended to guide and uplift man. Sangham poetry centred on man; but all later poetry, whatever form it took, was dedicated to God.

Early Tamil literature was classified as *aham* (pertaining to love themes) and *puṟam* (other themes) and the entire poetry of the Sangham age falls into these two categories. But some centuries later, the two intermingled and such a classification gradually fell into disuse. Similarly also, the concept of the five natural regions generally pertaining to the love themes of the earlier poetry gets intermingled.

Tolkāppiyam

All writing in Tamil down through the 20 centuries of the Christian era has been conditioned by the *Tolkāppiyam*. Hence, a brief account of its concepts is relevant to any introduction to the subject of Traditional Poetry.

Tolkāppiyam (c. 500–300 B.C.) by the poet Tolkappiyar, is the oldest Tamil book still available. It is a grammatical treatise, written by one who is said to have been a disciple of Agattiyar (Agastya), himself the author of a grammar in his own name, but which work is now unfortunately lost.

The first book of this work has chapters on letters, their names, articulation, combination of letters, the letter forms, the short *e* and *o* which are not in Sanskrit, and a peculiar shortened *u* (similar to ɔ) called *kuṟṟiyal ukaram*. The structures of words and the sequence of words have been studied with special care.

The second book deals with accidence and morphology, parts of speech, cases, syntax and the like; classification of words as the higher (*uyartiṇai*: humans) and the lower (*ahriṇai*=*al-tiṇai*: non-humans) is a special feature. Only four parts of speech are mentioned: *peyar* (noun), *viṉai* (verb), *iḍai* (particles) and *uri* (indeclinables or adjuncts). Tolkappiyar has formulated rules for absorbing Sanskrit terms into Tamil.

The third book deals with poetic themes on the entire gamut of life. Five of its chapters deal with *aham* or romantic poetry, one with *puṟam* or heroic poetry, and one each with similes, prosody and literary conventions. The *aham* chapters deal with seven aspects of love, or *tiṇai*, including five regional aspects (cf. Literary Criticism: Tamil). Natural or accepted love is of two kinds, *kaḷavu* (pre-marital) and *karpu* (marital love). Under each of these *tiṇais* are specified the people, their pursuits in life, the seasons, the times which are special to the particular love theme, the natural settings, the animals and birds and the tutelary deities. The very elaborate treatment is not a code of conduct for life; it is merely a poetic convention for poets to adopt or follow. It is probable that writers who had lived before Tolkappiyar had adopted these conventions and he has only codified their practices. *Puṟam* deals generally with war and peace. The chapter on prosody deals extensively with sentiment and figures of speech, and paves the way for the elaborate treatises on poetics and rhetoric, which were to come centuries later.

Aham and Puṟam. A concept peculiar to the Tamil language is *aham* (akam) and *puṟam*, which, as already stated, may be roughly described as romantic poetry and heroic poetry. All human activity among all classes of people in ancient times was governed by two sentiments: love and valour. And these became the main themes of traditional Tamil poetry. *Aham* deals with love between man and woman and all other sentiments arising out of this love. *Puṟam* embraces all other aspects of human life, beginning with valour and heroism and including munificence and general conduct. Almost all Sangham poetry is divided into these two sections and a large volume of conventions has grown around them.

The ancient Tamil poets also classified Nature into five physiographical regions, based on the natural terrain, and named them after the flowers of each region: *kuṟiñji*—the hills; *mullai* (jasmine)—the forests; *marutam*—the plains; *neital* (water lily)—the sea coast; and *pālai* (mimusops)—the arid desert. Certain love themes are traditionally associated with each region, such as *kuṟiñji*—union of lovers, *mullai*—separation after union, *marutam*—waiting under separation, *neital*—suffering under separation, and *pālai*—the woes of separation. To these themes, Tolkappiyar adds two more—*kaikkilai*, one-sided love, and *peruntiṇai*, unproper love. Tolkappiyar mentions these as isolated the

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but later grammars and the *kōvai* poems string them into a continuous narrative.

Sangham Poetry

The poetry of the Sangham age survives in the *Eṭṭuttohai* (The Eight Anthologies) and the *Pattuppāṭṭu* (The Ten Idylls). Almost all the books in these anthologies are occasional verses, except two. They include the work of about 420 poets and 30 poetesses who wrote between 300 B.C. and A.D. 250. Many Chera, Chola and Pandya crowned monarchs figure among the poets; so do persons from all strata of society from the brahmin down to the gipsy.

In Sangham poetry, romantic poems are five in number, heroic poems two and one is a musical composition. None of these is a narrative poem. Each verse in the romantic group, be it of five lines or 30 lines, enacts a scene in a drama; to understand the scene and the poem, the reader has to know the speaker, the person spoken to and the context. Naturally this dramatic setting has given rise to many conventions. The *poruḷ adhikāram* part of *Tolkāppiyam* deals with the codification of similar themes of an earlier period. The poet's views are not uttered by him but are spoken by some character in the love story—a hero or heroine, his comrade or her maid, a foster-mother or even a bystander. Thus the element of drama is always present. A passing thought or a fleeting strain of music is vividly expressed in each verse. Very popular similes and some elementary figures are introduced; these only give the characters' words greater force and relevance. Their very simplicity is the hallmark of their high lyrical quality.

Kuruntohai has 5–8 lines in each verse and contains some of the sweetest short-line poems in Sangham poetry. Here the lady love speaks of her love to her maid:

Vaster than the earth,
Loftier than the heavens,
Deeper than the seas,
Is my love for my lover,
The lord of the hills,
Where the sturdy *kuṟiñji* generates honey.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

In another verse, the lover, anxious to comfort his lady love who has sensed his impending separation from her, speaks to her of their love:

Who was my mother, who thy mother?
How is my father related to yours?
How did you and I know each other?
Our loving hearts have become one,
Even like the rain drops falling on the red soil.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

Naṟṟinai is a collection that has 9–12 lines in each verse. *Ahanāṅūṟu* has 13–31 lines in its verses. Its length has introduced a greater elaboration in its lines. It also contains many references to contemporary chiefs, which is a valuable historical feature.

Kalittohai, another anthology on the *aham* theme, contains 150 verses in the Kalippa metre, as its name suggests, written on the five *tiṇais* (physiographical regions). Each verse has several parts, of which three are important: the beginning, which introduces the subject; a second part, usually called *tāḷiśai*, a musical form, which develops the subject; and the climax or finale. Sometimes there are other elaborations. The lines are unlimited and hence the scope for longer narration. If the verses of *Kuṟuntohai*, etc. are brilliant polished gems, those of *Kalittohai* are jewels, where many such gems are set to make a beautiful and dazzling design of colour and brilliance. Each verse is an elaborate drama, a one-act play often with more than one character. The change of moods, the play of emotions and the delineation of character are all well expressed in these verses. This verse by Kapilar, a narration by a love-sick damsel, illustrates the characteristic dramatic quality of the *Kali* compositions:

Harken, my friend with shining bracelet.
Remember the mischievous urchin
Who used to tease us, trampling down
the toy houses we built in sand on the streets,
Plucking away the flowers from our hair
and snatching the striped balls we played with?
Some days back, I was with my mother,
He came to us saying, 'Madam, I am thirsty'.
Mother asked me to give him a cup of water.
So I went, without knowing who he was.
But he caught my hand and drew me to him.
Frightened, I cried, 'O Mother, see what
This fellow does!' Terrified she ran in.
I told her, 'The drinking water choked him'.
In all innocence, mother gently stroked
his back. But that son of a thief
looked at me from the corner of his eye
as though he would kill me, and smiled!

(tr. S. Maharajan)

Aiṅkuru nūṟu consists of five groups of 100 short verses each, on the five *tiṇai*, by five authors. Each verse has 3–6 lines. Each 100 consists of 10 decads. Each verse of each decad carries a refrain which leaves room only for a very few words on the subject. But yet each author has been able to paint a picture charged with emotion and subtle suggestion.

The first *puṟam* anthology, *Patiṟṟupattu* is ten-tens, each verse glorifying the valour and benevolence of a Chera prince. The princes had rewarded the poets magnificently. The poetry, however, is rugged.

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Puṟanāṅūṟu. *Puṟanāṅūṟu*, 400 verses on *puṟam* themes, is very fine poetry. It is the one surviving book that serves as a window on the lives of the Tamil people of 2000 years ago at all levels. Women, ordinary bards, eminent poets and crowned monarchs share the poetry here. Friendship, heroism of women, dutifulness of the wife to her husband, compassion and universal brotherhood are some of the lofty sentiments advocated in these songs. Poets and musicians commanded the greatest respect from rulers.

Says one poet:

Any place is my place and the whole world is kin;
The good and the bad do not accrue from another,
Death has always been there;
Living is neither sweet nor bitter;
Life goes on in the manner ordained.
We neither bow to the great nor taunt the lowly. (tr.)

Says another:

All persons, be they princes or peasants,
require only a measure of rice for food, and two bits of cloth to cover the body;
other needs are equal;
hence the best use of riches is giving;
if we expect to enjoy everything,
most will escape us. (tr.)

A Chola prince says:

There are people like the little field mouse, which fills its hole with the mature grains in the fields. There are yet others like the valiant tiger, which pursuing a wild boar for food, declines to eat it because it fell to its left; it goes without food that day, and the next day it fells a he-elephant on its right and eats it. Let me have more days of companionship with men of such calibre. (tr.)

Paripāḍal is a collection of musical pieces, only 24 of the original 70 still surviving. The songs give in a colophon the names of the author, the tune and the tune setter. The verses are in praise of Muruha, river Vaihai and Tirumāl (Vishnu), but the music is lost to us today. Enjoyment of life at its fullest is found here; the songs on Vaihai speak of a rich and luxurious enjoyment of the river-side. A large number of love themes are also treated in *Paripāḍal*.

That its thought content is of very high quality, there is no doubt. A poet says: 'My Lord, I do not pray for wealth or gold, nor for the pleasures of life; I pray Thee, grant me compassion, love and charity.' This is a sentiment unparalleled in the literature of the day.

Pattuppāṭṭu (The Ten Idylls) are ten long separate poems. The poems range from 103 to 782 lines. Of the ten, six are on *puṟam* and four are on *aham*; again, of the six, five are of the *prabandha*, *āṟṟup-pāḍai* type. Of the six, one is in praise of Lord Muruha, four are in praise of kings, and the last in praise of a local chief.

Tirumuruhāṟṟuppaḍai by poet Nakkirar has probably been placed first in the *Pattuppāṭṭu* as an invocation preceding the collection. It is in praise of the traditional six camps of Lord Muruha. One who has enjoyed the grace of the Lord directs another to the presence by describing the six places vividly. Descriptions of Nature, the manner of worship, the disciplined ways of His devotees, the life of the hill tribes and the conferment of His grace are all dealt with in graphic language. Muruha here is a manifestation of the Absolute, Siva.

Porunar, *Perumpāṇ*, *Siṟupāṇ*, and *Kūttar-āṟṟuppaḍai* (called *Malaipaḍukaḍām*) are poems directing particular classes of bards to the chief concerned for assistance. All are, of course, long poems depicting a carefree life, the enjoyment of the good things thereof, a love of Nature, generosity and liberal giving. They give us a deep insight into the life of the period at all levels.

Mullaippāṭṭu and *Neḍunalvāḍai* are long *aham* poems in the conventional pattern. *Mullaippāṭṭu* was taught by the poet Kapilar to the Aryan prince Brhatta to show him the elegance of Tamil love poetry. *Paṭṭiṇappālai* is both *aham* and *puṟam*, depicting the glory of the rule of Karikal Chola. *Maduraikkāñji* is a *puṟam* poem where the poet teaches the great Pandya ruler the transience of life.

All the poems are generally couched in a crisp and difficult language. But they merit study as they are of considerable historical and sociological significance.

Muttoḷḷāyiram is a rare sensitive poem of the 4th century (a little later than the Sangham period). It celebrates the three monarchs, Chera, Chola and Pandya, in 900 verses. The whole poem is not available today except for a collection of about 110 *veṇbā* verses incorporated in an anthology of the 14th century named *Puṟattiraṭṭu*. The available verses are each a fine and sensitive work of art, expressing an exquisite lyricism, be it *aham* or *puṟam*. An example of this verse is the following lament. A damsel pining for the love of the Pandya is ordered by her mother not to look at the king when he passes along the street. The mother fears her daughter may fall in love with him. But that girl has already seen him and lost her heart to him. She now asks her comrade, 'Has my mother never been young and lost her heart to another?'

She sings:

O my friend, with eyes flashing
Like gleaming swords, and
bracelets nestling on the graceful arms!
Mother bids me, 'Do not cast your eyes
On the Pandya, wearing the garland
Of fresh blooming flowers, with valour
spitting fire from his lance,
And his forces always

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Conquering enemy land'—
Tell me this: ere she grew old,
Had she never been young? (tr. S. Maharajan)

Tirukkuṟaḷ

Tiruvalluvar's *Tirukkuṟaḷ* (Kuṟaḷ with its honorific title *tiru*, holy) is acclaimed the greatest Tamil classic. It expresses the most profound thoughts on the most baffling problems of life; yet it demonstrates the greatest economy of words and perfection of style. *Kuṟaḷ* means short; each verse in the book is a couplet, the first line having four feet the second only three. Despite this handicap and the constraints of brevity, the author has produced a classical masterpiece that has survived the test of time. The book is divided into 133 chapters or decads, each containing ten verses. The chapters are arranged in three books, in the manner of all Tamil works, dealing with virtue, wealth and pleasure (*aṟam*, *poruḷ* and *inbam*) respectively. The books are known as *Aṟattuppāl*, *Poruṭpāl* and *Kāmattuppā* (*pāl* is part).

There is a prefatory section of four chapters in which the praises of God, the Rain, the Ascetic and Righteousness are sung. The first book on *aṟam* contains 34 chapters. The author equally praises both householder and ascetic. He gives woman a lofty status. Non-violence and truth are the noblest principles; righteousness is not a mere end, it is the means also. Non-receiving and the reign of reason are held high. Purity of the heart transcends mere ritual. Fate can be beaten hollow by undaunted effort. His insistence on work and faith in its dignity and success is a gospel for all time. Time and space do not limit his concepts; they are not bound with caste (*varṇa*) or with exigency. The following verses are illustrative:

Why use foul words
When there is an abundance of sweet words to choose from?
It is just like going out of the way
to pilfer unripe fruits
When sweet ripe fruits are within your reach

He has a word to say to modern platform orators:

Those who have learnt not to utter a few faultless words
lust alas! after myriad-worded speech.

You may even utter words productive of evil;
but utter not words, which are barren and fruitless.

The one, who applauds empty words,
is miscalled a man;
He must be called the chaff among men.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

The second book on *poruḷ* has 70 chapters dealing in general with polity and administration. The author does not refer to any ruling dynasty. He wrote his book when the Chera, Chola and Pandya monarchs ruled the land; but he has not mentioned them. His dicta pronounced for the edification of kings holds good even in the days of a democratic republic. He holds, it is a just rule that is important, not mere valour. His code for rulers and administrators could well have been the forerunner of Gandhian Truth and Non-violence (Love). He enjoins man to test everything by his own reason whatever be the subject or whatever be the source. He transcends all ritual and pleads for the purity of the heart:

If one can be free from falsehood,
it is needless for him to practise any other virtue.

External cleanliness can be procured
by a wash with water;
but internal cleanliness can be secured
only by truth-speaking.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

The third book, on *inbam*, devotes all its 25 chapters to love themes. Each verse here is a small complex drama in four or five words. The words are placed in the mouths of characters in dramatic situations and hence their suggestion and import is all the greater. The book indicates that the author has had the most felicitous conjugal life. It deals with idealized love and not with mere physical love and sensual pleasure. The following verses are illustrative:

Softer than flower is love, but only a few
can indulge in its delicacy.

Fire burns you only if you touch it;
Can it, like love-sickness, burn you
when you keep yourself away from it?

My majestic manhood, at which my foes
tremble in the battlefield,
How does it break down at the sight
of this girl with the luminous forehead?

I knew not before, that thing
called Death; now I know it;
It has the form of a woman
with large and battling eyes.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

The author has looked at love not only through the eyes of man, but also through the eyes of woman. Here a woman speaks, in a calm moment, after a period of sulking:

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When he is in my presence
I see nothing in him that is faulty,
but when he goes out of my presence,
I see nothing in him that is not faulty.

(tr. S. Maharajan)

The idealized picture is relevant for all time and for all mankind. The author speaks of love, of the union of two souls which transcends the physical body. There is absolutely no element of vulgarity in this masterpiece. Yet of the author of this great work nothing is certain today. The author's real name—he is known as Tiruvalluvar—his place, his class in society, his religion, his age, his profession in life are all uncertain. Legend says he was a weaver by profession and that he led a happy domestic life with his wife Vasuki. But what is certain is that he towers far above the greatest of the Tamil writers of any time. That is because of the relevance of his book, in all its three parts, not only to Tamilnadu, not only to the Hindu folk, but to the whole world of humanity. Though the charter is drawn by a man, it applies with equal force to woman also. In a society ridden by caste, he draws up a testament for a casteless society. The whole book, a charter of human conduct, has the same force today as when it was written, about 20 centuries earlier. And it will continue to have the same force to the end of time.

The *Kuṟaḷ* is a complete integrated work of art in conception, expression and in its poetry. The author addresses himself to Man. He does not dictate, condemn or prophesy. He always talks in a homely manner, as a friend and elder counsellor. His language is simple and direct, without any flourish but always sharp and clear, at times having the force of a sabre thrust.

Tiruvalluvar takes Man as it were by the hand and leads him through the first ideal level of worldly fame and acclaim, gently to the second level of contemplation, meditation, sacrifice and renunciation; this is a level of enlightenment, that of the Universal Man; from this stage again, he leads him on to the still higher and the highest level of the Sage, the Superman, through the practice and development of a group of five distinguished virtues, viz. universal love, sensibility, helpfulness to all, compassion and truth-speaking. The Sage conceived of by *Tirukkuṟaḷ* as a Superman is one who has liquidated his ego, who has an unclouded vision of Ultimate Reality, who is in a perpetual state of bliss, who is full of compassion for his fellowmen, who has a profound concern for all lives that are in distress on the earth, and who without any limitations of caste, creed, community or nation, rushes to help any one in distress and thus practises Universal Love. He regards spiritual bliss as a state of consciousness to be achieved Here and Now and not Hereafter. Hence his omission of *Viḍu* or *mōkṣa* as the usual fourth part of the book.

Didactic Writing

Writers in Tamil, as in all Indian languages, ancient and modern, have always laid great emphasis on an ethical way of living. The goals of life, *dharma* (virtuous living), *artha* (seeking wealth), *kāma* (enjoying a felicitous domestic life) and *mōkṣa* (release from all worldly ties) are common to all literatures of India and are called *aṟam*, *poruḷ*, *inbam* and *viḍu* in Tamil. The last is a spiritual discipline; the others having given rise to much distinguished writing in Tamil. The most ancient of such writing is, of course, *Tirukkuṟaḷ*; there have been several others in the post-Sangham period. The peroration of Kannaki at the end of the story in *Śilappadhikāram* is an exhortation in 18 lines to people to lead a life of love and righteousness.

O people of the world,
Keep away from both pleasure and pain;
Know God and adore the knowers;
Do not utter falsehood or scandal;
Foreswear meat and desist from killing;
Distribute alms and undergo penances;
Never be ungrateful; scorn bad friends;
Do not bear false witness; adhere to Truth;
Always be in the council of the righteous;
And keep away from the counsel of the others;
Do not covet another man's wife;
Help those that are in distress;
Foster the householder's state, reject the other.
By some device be rid of drink, theft, lust, falsehood and useless words.
Youth, wealth and the body will not last.
Try to secure what is beneficial to the hereafter,
All the days allotted to you,
And to the extent you are capable. (tr.)

There are a few lines even in *Tolkāppiyam* (the grammatical treatise) and in *Kalittohai*, as well as many verses in *Puṟanāṅūṟu*, that are didactic in content. For instance:

All places are our place and all are kin.
Even if you cannot do good to another,
Refrain from doing ill.
Begging is indeed bad, but declining to give is worse.
The purpose of wealth is to give.
The reign of the monarch is governed by righteousness.
The ungrateful has no redemption.
Giving of food is giving of life. (tr.)

A large number of short *veṇbā* works on ethical subjects were written in the post-Sangham age. One of them is *Nālaḍi* which in 400 verses, follows the *Kuraḷ* closely. There is a Tamil saying that means '*Nālaḍi* and *Kuraḷ* lend weight

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one's utterances'. Being a Jain work, *Nālaḍi* condemns in strong terms meat-eating:

There are two burning grounds—
One burning the bodies of those
That do not renounce, taking heed
Of misery in this life;
The other is the crematorium
For the carcasses of fowl and beast,
And that is the stomach of the senseless (who eat meat).
(tr.)

Stronger condemnation of meat-eating is unlikely to be found in any other language.

Nālāḍi also anticipates, about 1500 years earlier, the three monkey figures on Mahatma Gandhi's table:

To him who can be deaf
To the secrets of another,
Blind towards another's wife,
and dumb in carrying tales—
Is there need to teach him ethical conduct? (tr.)

Paḷamoḷi Nāṅūṟu, another Jain work embodies a crisp, well-known proverb in the last line of each of its 400 *veṇbā* verses, using the other three lines to illustrate the proverb by an equally well-known story of anecdote. In spite of the artificiality created by introducing the proverbs, there is much good poetry in this work.

The social environment was such in the centuries after the occupation of Madurai by the Kalabhras, that moral values were at a low ebb, necessitating thinking minds to hold before the people a righteous code of conduct. This partly explains the composition of more than a dozen didactic works in this period, of which *Nālaḍi* and *Paḷamoḷi* are the largest in size and most important. Among the others are *Tirikadukam* (Three Medical Herbs), *Nānmaṇikkaḍikai* (Four Gems), *Sirupañcamūlam* (Five Minor Roots) and *Ēlādi* (Cardamom and other Medical Ingredients), each of 100 *veṇbā* verses, with three, four, five and six maxims and observations on life respectively given in each verse.

Avvai, the most beloved and revered poetess of the Tamil people, has written, many centuries later, some gnomic poetry that has became household word even among the illiterate. Her most popular writings are *Āttisūḍi* (The *Bauhinia*-wearer—meaning Siva) and *Konṟai-vēndan* (The *Cassia*-wearer, again meaning Siva, whose favourite flowers these were). These poems are of 108 and 91 lines respectively, each line commencing with the vowel and vowel consonants of the Tamil alphabet. *Āttisūḍi* has only two feet, marking only half a line of verse, while *Konṟai-vēndan* has four feet, a full line of verse. In both, she lists the rules for an upright and useful life in society and these have relevance in any clime and time. Here she often summarises in one line—with greater force and thrust—what *Kuṟaḷ* says in two. Though short and pithy, her lines have a fine poetic rhythm which places them on a par with the best in poetry. Here are a few lines from *Āttisūḍi*:

Love doing the righteous.
Cease not to learn.
Do not be ungrateful.
Live for others.
Whatever you do, do well.
Despise not God,
Learn many sciences.
Wake up before dawn. (tr.)

And from *Konṟai-vēndan*:

The mother and father are the first known gods.
Speak with humility even to the lowly.
If you seek honour, take to the plough.
Even if the matter be trivial,
bestow thought on it before acting.
The best penance is not to kill or eat meat.
The sweetest meal is that got by your own labour. (tr.)

Two other poems by Avvai, *Mūdurai* (Wise Saying) and *Nalvaḷi* (The Good Path) are equally popular. About 30 of her occasional verses are also known and these too bear the same mark of excellence as the rest.

Aṟaneṟic-cāram (13th century) by Munaippāḍiyār in 226 verses came immediately after Avvai. About four centuries later, Prince Ati Vikrama Pandya wrote a short poem of the gnomic type called *Naṟumtohai* (The Fragrant Collection), which consists of about 90 aphorisms on the model of Avvai, but with each composed in more than one line. The gnomic writing reached its culmination in the work of the modern nationalist poet Bharati who has imitated Avvai in his *Pudiya* (new) *Āttisūḍi* but has expounded thoughts that are modern and revolutionary.

Epic Poetry

Whereas all epic stories have been borrowed or adapted from the Sanskrit in all the Indian languages, the first two epics in Tamil are original Tamil stories, reflecting Tamil culture and its social and literary traditions. The two are *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai*, written in the 3rd and 5th–6th centuries respectively. With these epics Tamil poetry began to emerge from a period of isolated verses found in the Sangham poetry into one of long, sustained narrative poetry. This poetry held sway in Tamil literature for nearly 10 centuries. These epics run to about 5,200 and 4,800 lines respectively, in the *āśiriyam* metre which is akin to the blank verse.

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Śilappadhikāram. The story of *Śilappadhikāram* (*śilambu*—anklet) is set in the capitals, Puhar (Kāvērippaṭṭiṇam), Madurai and Vañji, of the Chola, Pandya and Chera kingdoms.

Kovalan (Kōvalan), a young merchant of Puhar, forsakes his wedded wife Kannaki and lives with Madhavi, a dancer, spending his large fortune on her. A girl, Manimekhalai, is born to them. During the local *Indira-viḷā* (festival), he unreasonably suspects Madhavi of infidelity and leaves her. He returns to Kannaki, expresses remorse for his past conduct, and takes her to Madurai to sell her *śilambu* so that he can rebuild his fortunes with what they get for it. A goldsmith in the city who had stolen the Queen's anklet sees Kannaki's (Kaṇṇaki) anklet in the hands of Kovalan in the market place, reports to the king that Kovalan is the thief, and has him beheaded for the crime without any enquiry. Hearing of this tragedy, Kannaki goes to the king's court and proves her husband's innocence. The king commits suicide because of a feeling of remorse on the great injustice he has done. The queen follows him. But Kannaki is still not appeased; she now invokes the god of fire to destroy the city. She then goes to the Chera country, climbs a hill and from there goes to Heaven in a celestial chariot brought for her by Kovalan. The Chera king Senkuttuvan learns of this incident and, urged by his queen, makes an expedition to the Himalayas to get a special stone to make an image of Kannaki, now hailed as the goddess of chastity. At the consecration of the temple, Kannaki herself appears as a vision and blesses the people.

The poem contains 30 chapters, almost all in *āśiriyam* metre, except the musical pieces which are in *Kalippa* metre. The story is a real tragedy. But in keeping with Indian tradition, the third canto seems to have been added. later, deifying Kannaki and giving a superhuman and satisfying conclusion to the story. This canto *Vañjikkāṇḍam* makes fiction look like history.

The author of this great poem was Ilango, a brother of Cheran Senkuttuvan. In his epic work, he showers praises on the three Tamil kings, their kingdoms and their deities. This is the only Tamil book of the ancient period which deals elaborately with the three divisions of Tamil, *iyal*, *iśai*, and *nāṭakam*, details of which are to be found nowhere else. The preamble to the epic states that Ilango seeks to establish in this work three truths—that *dharma* (justice) itself will destroy the king when he swerves from the path of justice, that elders will extol the chaste woman, and that *karma* will always make one reap the fruits of one's own action. The author certainly succeeds in his aims.

Maṇimēkhalai. *Maṇimēkhalai*, another long epic in 30 chapters, was written by Śāttanār. The author wrote this book to preach the Buddhist philosophy.

Manimekhalai is the daughter of Kovalan and Madhavi. Grieved over the tragic death of Kovalan, Madhavi decides that her daughter should not lead the life of a courtesan but should become a religious recluse. The hurdles are many. Madhavi's mother goads the prince to make love to Manimekhalai. The knowledge that the prince was her husband in a previous birth makes the heart of the young girl go out to the prince. And then there is the vengeful attitude of the queen-mother after the death of the prince. Manimekhalai passes through a maze of love, jealousy and vengeance, but emerges unscathed, as a champion of *dharma* (virtue). Having considered all the different schools of philosophy of her day, Manimekhalai chooses to become a Buddhist nun.

Sattanar champions the goals of *dharma* and *mōkṣa* and ignores *artha* and *kāma* in this book, which is good narrative but not great poetry. A high standard of poetry is, however, reached occasionally, especially in the lines on the Buddha and the *dharma*.

Jain Epic. *Perumkathai* is a long epic (c. 700) taken from the *Paiśāci* language (not extant now). It tells the story of Prince Udayanan, celebrated in Sanskrit lore and literature. He courts and marries several princesses in turn, but ultimately, after a full life, renounces the world. This poem portrays the luxury, affluence and richness of life at royal and higher levels. Although there is some story interest here, there is no unity of plot or construction.

The author Konguvelir, a chief of the Kongu region, pays great attention to the cataloguing of details connected with everyday life. His book, therefore, is a brilliant portrayal of life in the Tamil country in that period. The author probably toured the Pallava, Pandya and Chola territories to acquire this information. The richness of life, the abundance of the necessities of life, the glamour of the city, the beauty and culture of the men and women, their arts, games and recreation, the rivers and the river culture—all these are recorded in this great epic and are not found in such minute detail anywhere else. On this account it is a valuable poem. It is not read for its poetic quality, its characterizations, or for its portrayal of the deepest human emotions. But it can still be read with pleasure and profit. Its language is redolent scent of Sangham poetry.

The best amongst the other epics are *Cintāmaṇi* and *Cūḷamaṇi* (long epic poems in 3,150 and 2,130 *viruttam* verses respectively; 9th and 10th centuries) which are storehouses of Jain philosophy. Each deals with the large number of love-affairs of a prince, his many escapades and, finally, his renunciation of the world in Jaina fashion. There is occasionally some good poetry in the smaller book, but the two fail as great writing in the matter of characterization, dramatic presentation and exploring the depths of the human heart.

Kamba Rāmāyaṇam. The story of the Ramayana of Kamban was taken from the Sanskrit Ramayana of Valmiki. When Kambar chose the Ramayana, he did not choose it because

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Rama was considered the incarnation of Vishnu the Supreme Being; he chose it only for the potentialities it offered for epic creation. Kambar did not merely portray Rama as others before him had portrayed him; he elevated him to the higher level of the ideal hero.

Kambar was a supreme artist. He drew largely on the Vaishnava and the Saiva canons, both regarding subject matter as well as versification. The warmth, flexibility and song quality of the Alvar and Nayanmar hymns helped him with the prosody and diction of his poem. He was deeply concerned with the culture and traditions of the Chola-nad. He took a panoramic view of life, of human character, its depths and innermost secrets. It is not right to say that he copied or adapted anything from anyone. Coming from a sturdy stock in cultured Tamil society, he had a great legacy not only in the arts and letters but also in social culture and philosophy. He utilizes this legacy in his book.

Kambar's epic, though it has all the characters and outline of Valmiki's, is yet different in plot, in construction, in space, in human relationships and in accepted values and ideals, and not merely in dramatic details. The discerning student ignores the many stories woven round Kambar and the minor poems attributed to him. Like *Kuṟaḷ*, his Ramayana is a poem for all time, one which the Tamil people can feel proud of and cherish as long as the language exists.

The Ramayanam of Kambar runs to 10,368 verses, excluding 1,293 interpolated verses. The fact that one-eighth of the verses are interpolated shows the great popularity the poem had among the people and the scholars. The traditional six *kāṇḍams* (books) are followed in the Tamil also. It is amazing that no one has ever attempted to tell the story of Rama in Tamil in all the thousand years after Kambar, although the Mahabharata had been attempted by half a dozen writers. That is because the work of Kambar is so outstanding, so challenging and so lyrical that it cannot be written better.

The characteristics which place the Tamil Ramayana on such a pinnacle of glory are the characterization, the dramatization, the narration of the story, the poetry of the great epic, and the perennial philosophy embedded in it.

Although Kambar drew from Valmiki for his main characters, he endowed each with life and blood and made them stand out as distinct characters. Even minor characters such as Jatayu the eagle, Manthara the hunchback, and Satrughna, one of the brothers of Rama who is not given any role in the story, are drawn in bold strokes. The introduction of each character, his delineation and his actions and words at crucial moments are all sketched so deftly that each is as alive for the reader as Rama or Ravana. Take for instance this revealing bit of characterization:

Satrughna, though a royal prince, has no part to play in the long story. He silently walks in the shadow of Bharata and Kambar gives him only one occasion to speak. Disappointed that Rama is not returning on the promised day to Ayodhya, Bharata, who has been deputizing for Rama as ruler for 14 long years, proposes to immolate himself in the fire. He asks Satrughna to rule till Rama arrives. Satrughna, in the only words he utters in the whole of the Ramayana, lists the brothers of Rama and their roles and speaks with great disdain about the role he is now asked to play:

> One brother accompanied Rama, who relinquished
> his kingdom and went to rule over the jungles.
> Another now proposes to give up his life
> because the exiles had not returned as promised.
> And here stand I, unblushingly to rule over the kingdom!
> Sweet indeed is this blooming sovereignty. (tr.)

In these words of biting scorn may be seen not only Satrughna's lofty character but also the nobility of his personality, which makes him a fitting brother of Rama.

Kamba Rāmāyaṇam is known in popular lore as *Kambanāṭakam*, because of the dramatic scenes occurring in every page of the epic. Rama has gone into the forest and Bharata follows him with the royal retinue to bring him back. Guha the boatman ferries them across the Ganga. At Guha's request, Bharata introduces him to Kausalya, the mother of Rama, and Sumitra, the mother of Lakshmana. Guha, in tears, prostrates himself before them. Next Bharata has to introduce his own mother, Kaikeyi. In a fit of self-deprecation, caused by being born the son of Kaikeyi who is responsible for all this calamity and is yet alive, Bharata bursts forth:

> Can't you guess?
> She is the author of all this misery
> the foster-mother of Evil,
> Who had borne me long in her accursed womb,
> Grinding me down mercilessly, and now
> appears, in a world where all life seems dead,
> With a grief-free face
> If you do not guess her, let me tell you,
> She is the one that bore me! (tr.)

The situation is tense. As the pent up fury of Bharata surfaces, there is indignation and embarrassment all round. Kaikeyi may be the author of all evil, but to Guha she is the mother of the noble Bharata. What can he do now? Kambar comes to the rescue. The boat carrying them reaches the other bank. Guha just bows to her; and Kambar drops the curtain. In tune with the swift movement of the story, Kambar abruptly changes here the long metre into a short one of swift movement.

There are hundreds of such dramatic scenes where Kambar, in similar manner, dramatically rings down the curtain, changes the scene and proceeds with the story.

Kambar has adapted the story of Valmiki so that it is now in tune with the culture of the people of Tamilnadu. To do

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this he has made several minor and major changes in the story. One instance may be mentioned. Rama's coronation is stopped by the wiles of Manthara the hunchback, but Valmiki does not give any motive for this action. To the reader, this vengeful attitude may seem unreasonable. But Kambar, well versed in the Vaishnava canon, finds there a line which he exploits. The *āḻvār* has said that while Rama was a little boy he used to aim a ball of clay with his bow at the hump of Manthara for fun. Kambar now says that Manthara nursed a grudge against Rama on this account and this made her stop Rama's coronation through the influence of Kaikeyi, whom she served as a maid.

Similar instances are many. Thus does Kambar present a story plausible from all possible points of view, something which Valmiki's text fails to do.

Kambar was hailed as the emperor of poesy in his own day. From the first verse to the last, his songs are poetry of the first order and it is this poetic element that places him head and shoulders above all Tamil poets, ancient and modern. The instances shown here of his handling of Satrugna and the boat scene are indeed fine lyrical poetry. The famous Mithila scene, where Rama, following Visvamitra, looks up at Sita on the balcony of the royal palace and they fall in love with each other, is typical of Kambar introducing Tamil lyricism into Ramayana poetry.

As for perennial philosophy, Kambar is concerned with the eternal verities of life. Coming after the Āḻvāṛ and the Nāyanmār, he cannot but have been powerfully influenced by their God-intoxicated songs. No wonder he sings similar poetry himself given the occasion. He creates occasions for songs which not only uphold values but expresses a passionate concern for things metaphysical and philosophical. The very invocation to the epic poem is itself one such instance:

He who creates all the worlds,
Sustains and dissolves them,
He who does these as His endless sport—
He is the Master: In Him we seek refuge. (tr.)

The occasions when characters like Viradha, Kabandha, Sarabhanga and the others recognise the divine hand of Rama in releasing them from their bonds and pray to Him are occasions for Kambar to express his own philosophical tenets and spiritual experiences. Viradha, for instance, praises His immanent and transcendental form, thus:

No calf there is that does not know its mother,
The mother also knows its calf—Thou art
The Mother of all in the Universe,
And Thou knowest, My Lord, all things.
But how is it then, they do not
Realise Thy nature? What illusion
Is this, O Lord that can be present
without seeming to arrive? (tr.)

It is indeed no exaggeration to say that the *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* is as much a source of joy and guidance in life as the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* to the Tamil people, for all time.

The Itihāsas. The stories of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the national epics of India (called *Itihāsas* in Sanskrit), have been told in all the major Indian languages. Valmiki's Ramayana, considered as the first poem in the Sanskrit language, was retold in a manner appropriate to the great culture of the Tamil people by Kambar and no one in Tamilnadu has had the temerity to touch the subject since.

The Mahabharata, on the other hand, has been attempted by several Tamil authors. The original in Sanskrit, which started with about 10,000 verses by Vyasa, is now available in ten times the size. The Mahabharata has been attempted by a Chera monarch. It is also remarkable that the Pandyas, the Pallavas and the Cholas have all in turn patronised the production of a Tamil Bharatam. But all these books are completely lost. However, another Bharatam, *Bhārata veṇbā*, written in the 9th century, under the patronage of Nandi Varma Pallava III of Kanchi, by Bharatam Pāṭṭan Perundevanar, is available in fragments; out of an original 10,000 verses only about 1,000 are now available. This book is great poetry besides being the first *campu-kāvya* (prose and verse) in the Tamil language where *campu* is rare. Its prose is the first specimen in the Tamil language of the *maṇipravāla* style. The best Tamil Mahabharatam is the 14th-century work, in about 4,300 verses, by Villiputtūrar. Out of the 18 cantos (*paṛvas*) in the original, he stops with the tenth. His poetry is remarkable for its *candam* (a mechanical rhythm of the syllables). It is partly on this account that this Bharatam has been popular even among the semi-literates. Villi is great at character portrayal and his characters live in people's memory.

The greatness of Villi is that he was not sectarian. A confirmed Vaishnava himself, he gave due praise to Siva whenever the occasion demanded it. The following lines illustrate this. Arjuna is performing penance in the forest to obtain from Lord Siva the weapon *Pāśupatāstra* which could help him vanquish Duryodhana's forces. He sings meditating before the form of Siva:

The Feet that kicked Yama the god of Death,
The tiger hide worn by Him,
His Form radiating moonbeams
on account of the white ash smeared thereon,
The three eyes spitting out the moon's rays,
The warm sunlight, and the flames of fire,
The matted locks, cassia decked,
and the Ganga waters held in it—
Arjuna stood like a mountain speechless,
Thinking of nought else but this Form. (tr.)

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Subrahmanya Bharati took a scene from the epic, the Vow of Draupati, and elaborated it into more than 300 verses of modern poetry. It is superbly lyrical, exquisitely dramatic and portrays the spirit of modern India's struggle for freedom from the British yoke; yet it is just one scene and nothing more.

The Bhāgavata. The Bhāgavata, which is also considered an *Itihāsa*, has been rendered into Tamil in epic form by two writers in the 16th century. They were written as puranas and their poetic value is not much. The earlier one, *Itihāsa Bhāgavatam* (1525) was written by Sevvaic—Cūduvar in 4,973 verses, while Arulaladasar wrote the *Purāṇa Bhāgavatam* (1550) in 9,147 verses. The two are a collection of stories and legends connected with Vishnu and his 10 incarnations. As such they will continue to serve as encyclopaedias in this field for centuries to come. Among minor epics, five may be mentioned. The story of Nala was composed in 424 *veṇbā* verses by Puhalendi (13th century) and it is very popular. Others are *Naiḍatam* by Prince Adivirarama Pandya, *Hariścandra Caritra* by Viran Kaviranjan and *Purūravas Caritra* by Aiyam Perumal, all of the 16th century. *Kuchēlōpakhyāna* is also a popular poem of the mid-19th century.

Devotional Poetry

Tamilnadu possesses a rich legacy of devotional poetry, Both in Saivism and in Vaishnavism, which has come down over a period of 1,500 years and more. The Saiva saints, known as Nayanmar (Nāyanmār), and the Vaishnava saints, known as Alvar (Āḻvāṟ), had toured all parts of the land, visiting the temples of Siva and Vishnu, and had sung their hymns. These hymns had inspired successive monarchs who had ruled the country to construct still more huge temples in granite for God.

Saivism. The chief hymn singers in Saivism are the four Nayanmars: Tiru Jñānasambandhar, Appar, Sundaramūrti (7th century) and Māṇikkavācakar (9th century). The songs of the first three Nāyanmārs are known as *Dēvāram* (Tēvāram).

The Saiva Canon is composed of 12 books, classified in the days of Rajaraja Chola I and of Kulottunga II some 150 years later. Jñānasambandhar (c. 636–651) contributes the 4,158 verses that comprise the first three books. He was visited by divine grace when he was just three and from then, till his final beatitude on the occasion of his wedding, at the age of 16, he toured the entire country, ceaselessly directing the people along the pathway to God. His chief contribution lies in his restoring the Tamil culture, language, music and religion in Pandyanad where all these had been suppressed by the alien Kalabhras.

Saint Appar (590–671), Jñānasambandhar's senior contemporary, lived to a ripe old age and wrote 3,066 verses which are counted as books 4, 5 and 6 in the canon. Early in life he had strayed from the Saiva fold and was brought back by the grace of Siva by the intervention of his sister Tilakavati. His second and third books are known as the *Tirukkuṟuntohai* and *Tirut-Taṇḍakam*. The *taṇḍakam* is an invention of his in metre. It is a long one, giving scope for the pouring forth of the heart's anguish and its deep yearning for the grace of God. Appar is called the 'Prince of Taṇḍakam' and when his songs are sung by the temple singers (*ōduvār*) the entire congregation is moved to tears even today. Appar speaks like the common man and his appeal is to the common man.

Saint Sundarar (7th–8th century), who wrote the 1,026 verses of book 7, was born with a past history. His wedding was stopped by Siva himself, who came to the place of the wedding as an old brahmin and claimed him as his servant. But later he was helped in two marriages by Siva himself. His past history entitled him to rank as a comrade of Siva, but when he took liberties with the comradeship, Siva stopped helping him. He promised never to leave his second wife, but when he left her, he lost his eyesight as punishment. His lamentations are most heart-rending. His eyesight was restored only after some time.

Māṇikkavācakar (latter half of the 9th century) sang the famous *Tiruvācakam* (holy utterances) in 51 poems running to 656 verses. A minister under the Pandya ruler, he squandered on temple building the money given him by the king to purchase horses. He was severely punished, despite his plea that it was the grace of Siva, in the form of a guru, that had enveloped him and made him act as he did. He suffered physically, but that was nothing compared to the anguish he felt thinking God had deserted him. The whole of *Tiruvācakam* is poetry of a high order and of a bone-melting quality, if we can say so.

Though he had visitations of grace from Siva, he also faced pangs of separation and periods of darkness. This process seemed to go on alternately until his final realization in Chidambaram. All these changes in experience are clearly echoed in his songs, which are, hence, entirely and intimately personal in content. The folk-song motifs echo this personal relationship and, as a rule, represent periods of joy and vision, not despair. Along with the joy of servitude and supplication, there is also in *Tiruvācakam* a strain of strong conviction. In such places, the poems portray the complete trust and assurance of a little child in its mother.

Māṇikkavācakar's songs form the 8th book. The 9th book was mostly composed under the patronage of the Chola rulers, between A.D. 900 and 1,044. It is a small book of 301 verses and includes a *pallāṇḍu* poem sung by a harijan saint, Sēndnār (c. 950).

Saiva hymnal poetry dates back from the Sangham age where Nakkirar wrote a poem on Muruha, called *Tiru Muruhārṟuppaḍai*. Apart from this poem, two poet-saints

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(5th century) deserve mention. The first is Tirumular whose 3,000 verses constitute the 10th book of the Saiva Canon under the title *Tiru Mantram*. The word *Mantram* implies the mystic nature of his writing. In a world of negation and mortification of the body, this saint preached that 'this body is to be cultivated because it is the abode of God and only through it can we strive for final liberation.' Though a mystic, he was also involved in the condition of society around him. He enjoined: 'Give, give, don't discriminate. Feed the poor. Do not amass property. Look at the crow which calls its entire flock when there is any morsel available.' He advised man that he was the maker of his own destiny. 'Oh friend, thou art thy foe as well as thy own friend. Thou makest this life and the one beyond.' He laid down the universal doctrine that 'God is one and all life is one.... Do you strive to live the life Eternal here in the present.... The ignorant do not know that Love is God. If they know, then this life will be one of ceaseless love.'

Karaikkal Ammaiyār ('The Mother of Karaikkal,' Karaikkal—a small east coast town) is the other noteworthy hymn composer. She had the unique honour of being called 'Oh Mother' by Siva Himself and hence her name. Her three songs form the opening section of the 11th book. She has a child's faith in the grace of God but at the same time enunciates absolute *advaita*, three centuries before Sankara. 'It is He that perceives that makes me perceive, He that is the instrument of perception, and He is also the thing perceived.' No *advaitin* has enunciated the *advaita* position more crisply and correctly.

The hymns of these saints have moulded the lives of millions of people for the last 15 centuries and more. They are not only hymns of total surrender and absolute supplication to God but are also poems of supreme lyrical beauty and poignant sensitivity.

Vaishnavism. Of the 12 Alvars who wrote the Vaishnava Canon, three, Poyhai Alvar, Bhutat Alvar and Peyalvar (also called the first alvar), were contemporaries who hailed from different areas in Tondainad and each sang 100 verses on Lord Vishnu. These are the earliest poems on Vaishnavism and show a considerable degree of religious tolerance and a joy born of a full and limitless experience of the divine grace. Though they express their surrender to Vishnu, they also mention Siva in equally reverential terms.

Tiruppanalvar, a bard of the lowest caste, was an ardent devotee of Vishnu at Sri Rangam. He has sung a short poem of 10 verses mentioning each feature of the Lord. This supremely ecstatic lyric has been included in the daily prayer-book of the Vaishnavas.

Tirumalisai Alvar has sung two poems which have a high philosophic value, although lyricism is absent.

Tondaradippodi sang two poems of exquisite lyrical quality. His poems form part of the Vaishnava daily prayer-book. Like Tirumalisai and Tiruppanalvar, he also lived in the 7th century.

Kulaśēkhara Alvar, a prince of the Cheranad, sang poems in 105 verses. He sang the first lullaby in Tamil to Sri Rama. His celebration of Tiruppati Hill is best known. In it he desires to be born a bird, a fish, a cup, a tree, a pea a stream, a step, in fact anything on the Hill. Such is surrender to the Lord on the Hill.

Periyāḷvār and his adopted daughter Andal have special place in the affections of the Vaishnavas. The alv like a true mother, sang a *Tiruppallāṇḍu* song to ward off evil eye afflicting the Lord Himself and this earned him title Periyalvar, the great alvar. The alvar, a bachelor, ent the mind of Yasodai and relives through his songs childhood of Krishna in Gokulam. His becoming the mot of God is an astonishing feature. His *Pallāṇḍu* is the poem in the language and some of the childhood song mot he employed helped to evolve some four centuries later new genre of minor poems called Pillai Tamil.

Andal (Āṇḍāḷ), the only woman poet among the alva was found as a baby in a flower garden by Periyalvar. brought her up as a mother would have. When she grew she chose Lord Ranganatha of Sri Rangam for her bri groom and the Lord Himself accepted her. Her song her dream marriage and her *Pāvai-pāṭṭu* are some of sweetest poems in Tamil. In all she wrote 173 verses.

Tirumangai alvar, chief of a 'kallar' (robber) clan, s more than 1,300 erudite verses on Vishnu. There may not much philosophical content in his songs, but their ver music, literary relish, and appeal as *aham* poems immense. The appeal of childhood is also there in th poems.

Nammāḷvār, of Vēḷāḷa (farmer) stock, was from southernmost part of Tamilnadu. Till sixteen, he had spoken a word. His first words were spoken to an Madhurakavi, who had come to him for illumination. very name is endearing: He is 'Nam-āḷvār' (our own ā In the Vaishnava hierarchy, he is the last alvar and the of the ācāryas. His songs number over 1,200. His *Tiru moḷi* is considered the Tamil Veda and innumerable c mentaries have been written on this work. His po enshrines the highest spiritual wisdom in Vaishnavism the fountainhead for all later inspiration. He addresses world and gives it an inspiring message of love and h

His disciple, Madhurakavi, is remembered for his song on Nammalvar. He did not sing a single song Vishnu, yet is included in the Vaishnava canon. Amu sang a hundred verses in praise of Ramanuja and Ramanuja's orders, this poem too was included in Vaishnava canon. The poem is important as it gi chronological sequence the 12 alvars.

Devotional poetry continued to be written in centuries. Three poets in particular should be menti this connection. Arunagirinathar, who lived around

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is the greatest figure in all later Tamil literature. His songs are known as *Tiruppuhal*. It is estimated that he wrote 16,000 verses, but only 1,360 are available today. They are all in praise of Muruha and are modelled on a plan of mechanical rhythm of sound. Sanskrit words vie with Tamil in expressing ideas and creating new forms and new rhythmic metrical patterns. He was a great master of music, creating the lilting effect that is the hallmark of his songs.

Tayumanavar (Tāyumānavar) on the other hand, was in the tradition of the Saiva Nayanmar. He preaches a philosophy that soars higher than the rituals of temple worship. He too uses a large volume of Sanskrit, but he has a force and vigour, a directness, simplicity and earnestness which make the listener forget the language. Tayumanavar has the greatest appeal for the thinking mind for all time.

Ramalinga (Rāmaliṅga) who followed the path of Tayumanavar, lived in the mid 19th century. He espoused compassion and was the one singer, the one saint, who devised practical measures to alleviate poverty and hunger.

Many of the Siddhas were contemporaries of Arunagiri. They expressed vehement criticism of caste and rituals and decried any outward devotion to a form.

All these schools of poetry, the Nayanmar, Alvar, Siddhar and Tayumanavar, contributed to the evolution of the devotional poems of Subrahmanya Bharati in the 20th century.

Influence of Sanskrit. The importance of Tamil lies in the fact that the intelligent modern student can fully understand poetry written 2,000 years ago. In the words of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'The Tamil language is perhaps the only example of an ancient classical language which has survived as a spoken tongue for more than 2,500 years with its basic structure almost unchanged.' Inevitably it must have been influenced by the other ancient language of India, Sanskrit.

Tolkāppiyam lays down rules for absorbing Sanskrit words into Tamil. Sanskrit, not being a spoken language, was less open to Tamil influence than Tamil, a spoken tongue, was to Sanskrit influence. Though there are a few words of Sanskrit origin in *Tolkāppiyam* and Sangham poetry, the books are independent of Sanskrit. *Śilappadhikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai* are totally independent of Sanskrit in all the features which go to make epic poetry. Sanskrit lovers have a tendency even to find Sanskrit sources for *Tirukkuṛaḷ*, but they are wrong because *Kuṛaḷ* preaches universal and eternal truths which transcend time and space, whereas the Sanskrit sources mentioned are all bound by time and space, are caste- or *varṇa*-ridden, and have no universal applicability.

Sanskrit influence is first seen, so far as poetry is concerned, in the didactic writing of the 18 *Kīlkkaṇakku*. In the period of Devotional Poetry (7th–9th centuries), there is found a greater admixture of Sanskrit words, but the poetry has not been influenced by Sanskrit. Hymns of the Tamil type do not exist in the Sanskrit language and the metres employed by the hymnists are more elastic and flowing than their Sanskrit counterparts. The initial rhyme, which is an important feature of all poetry from the days of the hymns, is totally unknown in Sanskrit. The *viruttam* metre might have been evolved through Sanskrit influence, but there the influence stops. The many types of changes to the metre, their *kāṇḍam* or mechanical rhythmic pattern, are all a legacy of pure Tamil origin.

The Chola period saw a large admixture of Sanskrit words with Tamil. But Sanskrit poetry was not imitated by Tamil. The *dūta kāvyas* (message poems) in Sanskrit were followed by similar *dūtu pṛabandhas*, but they were at a late stage. The many categories of important and popular minor poems, such as the *Kalambakam*, *Piḷḷai-Tamil*, *Ulā* and *Āṛṛuppaḍai* had no counterparts in Sanskrit.

Tamil poets in a later day vied with one another in adapting Sanskrit puranas in Tamil, but they did not reflect the natural genius of the language. The *upākhyānas* (episodes) in the Sanskrit *itihāsas* were also retold in Tamil, but the poets did not copy or translate these narrative poems. They took the gist of the stories and wove their own minor epics from them.

There were two specific attempts to Sanskritize the Tamil language and literature. Both took the form of grammatical treatises. One was *Vīraśōḷiyam* (11th century) by a Buddhist, who tried to adapt the Tamil language to the Sanskrit grammatical pattern, and the other was *Pṛayōga Vivēkam* (17th century) by a learned brahmin writer, attempting the same thing. Both were dismal failures.

In conclusion, it may be said that Sanskrit did influence the Tamil vocabulary, but not its grammar; that it did influence Tamil thinking, but not its poetry.

Philosophical Writing

When all ancient Tamil writing was in poetic form, naturally all philosophic writing was also in poetic form.

The epic *Maṇimēkhalai* included much of the Buddhist doctrines in its story. There were several other valuable treatises on Buddhist philosophy, but they have all been lost. The Jains tried to follow the brahminical Sanskrit cult and, so, did not produce any valuable treatises on their doctrines in Tamil. A dialectical long poem, *Nīlakēśi* (not a narrative poem), deals with Jain philosophy by refuting Buddhist doctrines. *Arumkalacceppu*, a rare work in the *Kuṛāḷ veṇbā* metre (in 180 verses), deals with some elementary Jain tenets. *Jīva sambōdhanai* is the only other Tamil poetical work dealing with Jain doctrines.

Saivism existed in Tamilnadu as the basic religion of all the people. Soon after the Saiva devotional songs had been sung by the gifted Nayanmar, the philosophy of the Saivas, the Saiva Siddhanta, was codified. Meykaṇḍār, the first in the line of Saiva spiritual preceptors (12th century), wrote

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down this philosophy in 12 *sūtras* (aphorisms) of 40 lines, in a work known as *Śivajñāna Bōdham*. Several other books on this philosophy followed. Two features distinguish this school from all other schools. One is that the original doctrinal writing of this school was in the Tamil language; the other is that all the preceptor-writers were gifted poets who had written good poetry. Writings like *Sivajñāna Siddhiyar* by Saint Arulnandi and *Śivaprakāśam* by Saint Umapati (12th–13th centuries) can be read and enjoyed as good poetry, forgetting that they are philosophical treatises.

Vaishnavism did not produce similar philosophical poetic treatises. A rare exception is the work of Vedanta Desikar (1269–1370), founder of the Vadakalai sect. His poems, collectively known as *Dēśikar Pṛabandham*, are considered good philosophical poetry. The collection, consisting of 20 poems in 405 verses, deals with some aspects of Vaishnava theology.

Sankara-Vedantic works were written in a large number from about the 13th century. One Sri Bhattanar translated the Bhagavad Gita into good Tamil verse (13th century). Tattuvarāyar (15th century) wrote a large number of minor poems in Tamil along with the *Īśvara gīta* and *Brahma gīta*; his writings run to over 3,000 verses. He was a giant of a writer who made significant and original contributions to the spread of Vedanta through poetry. *Kaivalya Navanītam* (The Butter of Absolute Oneness) by one Tāṇḍavarāyar (18th century, in 310 verses) became a Vedanta classic, the moment it was written.

The Puranas. The puranas are a legion in Tamil poetry, having been continually written from the 12th century to the present. The shrines in Tamilnadu are innumerable and local poets have glorified the legends connected with the temples into puranas (purana means an old story). Most of these puranas have been composed as epics, incorporating most of the features enumerated by Dandi in his book on *Alaṅkāra*. A large volume of this poetry is good, even great, poetry.

Most of the puranas on local shrines are a compilation of local legends and fairy-tales. To give an example, *Sevvāṇḍi-purāṇa* of Tiruchirappalli mentions the story of Siva enshrined there appearing as the mother of a lone young woman, to help when she was in labour, as her own mother could not reach her in time because the Kaveri was in spate. The purana says the Lord was thenceforth known as Tayumanavar (He who also became a mother).

Such puranas, however, have served a very important purpose in the continuity of Tamil literature, by making the Tamil people love their mother tongue during a most critical period during the Muslim invasion and the rule of the Telugu and Mahratta chiefs.

In the puranas there is no tragedy. Virtue and devotion to God, and godly men, are rewarded; vice and anti-social behaviour are always punished. But all sins are forgiven by God if the sinner surrenders himself with a true change of heart. Among the devotees, caste does not give any special distinction, all creation is one in the eyes of God. Women enjoy equal status with men.

All the poets devote several chapters to geographical features. They employ all forms of poetic conceit and all types of rhetoric, including puns and word play. These are a source of delight to scholars of the classical school. The poets use a language that is always literary, free of colloquialism and slang. A few Sanskrit words, fully Tamilized, are used, even those sparingly.

The *Mahā purāṇas* are 18 in Sanskrit. There are an equal number of *upapurāṇas*. They deal with the glory of God and living a godly life, observing many *vṛtas* and penances. Of the 18, a few have been adaptated or condensed in Tamil by eminent poets. *Matsya purāṇa* was translated by Vadamalaiyyappa (early 18th century), *Kūrma purāṇa* by Prince Ati Virarama Pandya, and *Liṅga purāṇa* and *Vāyupurāṇa* by his elder brother Varaguna Rama Pandya (all 16th century). All these have been conceived in the epic style.

Kanda purāṇam by Kachiyappa Sivacharya (14th century) is, like *Kamba-Rāmāyaṇam*, a great epic poem, with a story that runs parallel to the original in all details. It deals elaborately with the story of Skanda in a manner suitable for religious discourses. It also deals with the concepts of Saiva Siddhanta philosophy.

Puranas of the *sthala purāṇa* type are many. There is a purana for every little shrine in Tamilnadu. It is always in verse, sometimes running to even several thousand verses. These puranas hold out the hope of redemption to erring mortals.

Though the literary merit of such books cannot be great, there are a few of outstanding merit. One such is the *Tiruviḷayāḍal purāṇa* of Parañjōti (c. 1700). It is written in forceful and fluent language and has a power and sweetness of its own. Its devotional content, which is supremely lyrical, will influence the Saiva mind for a long time to come. This is a famous song sung by Siva Himself when He went to the house of a rival musician in order to save the reputation of His own *bhakta*, Pana Bhadra (a harijan singer):

To those that worship Thee
With a palmful of water and leaf petals,
Thou wilt grant, O Lord, Indra's elephant,
Vishnu's serpent couch and Brahma's lotus seat,
But though Thou grantest these,
What shall I reply to those
Who taunt Thee saying
Thou goest a-begging? (tr.)

Life-stories of saints and poets narrated in Purana-verse form a large part of Tamil poetry. *Periya Purāṇam* of Śekkiḷār (A.D. 1145), the first book to be called a purana

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narrates in 4,286 elegant verses the glories of the 63 Saiva saints. A great testament of devotion, it has fittingly been added as the 12th book of the Saiva Canon. It sings:

The rudraksha beads their necklace;
Rags clothe their body;
Their function, the service of the Lord.
They have a loving heart,
And so have no wants;
How shall I describe their heroism? (tr.)

Sirappurāṇam by Umaruppulavar (end of the 17th century) and *Tēmbāvaṇi* attributed to Father Beschi (1680–1747) also come under this category. Umaru was a good versifier and wrote the life of Prophet Mohammad in the traditional form of a Hindu Purana to satisfy a wish of his patron. Beschi, an Italian Jesuit, landed in India in 1710, assumed the Tamil-sounding name Vīramā Munivar and wrote the life of Joseph, putative father of Jesus Christ, with the help of Supṛadīpa Kavirāyar, a blind and aged poet who was his guru in Tamil learning. The book is an epic-type purana.

Summing up, it may be said that Tamil purana literature has filled the gap between the hymnal period and the modern period (beginning with the printing era) by producing considerable verse, some good poetry and, while directing people in the pathway to God, maintaining the continuity of traditional poetry.

Jain and Buddhist Writings

The Jain contribution to the growth of the Tamil language and literature has been considerable. This falls under three heads: grammar, epic writing and didactic writing.

In a sense, the Jains were the greatest grammarians. Amita Sagarar wrote two treatises on prosody, *Yāpparumkalam* and its *Kārikai*, i.e. commentary (11th century). Guṇavira Paṇḍitar wrote *Nēmināṭham*, dealing with orthography and etymology, and *Vaccanadi malai* dealing with poetics. Nārkavīrāja Nambi wrote *Ahapporuḷ viḷakkam*, a treatise on *aham* poetry (in the 12th and 13th centuries). *Cūḍāmaṇi Nighaṇṭu*, a lexicon, was written by Maṇḍalapuruṭar in the 16th century. But the greatest grammar writing was *Nannūl*, in two books, by Bhavanandi Munivar (13th century), a marvellous piece of succinct analytical writing, which developed and codified all the thoughts and truths in the language in the 16 centuries after *Tolkāppiyam*.

The three great Jain epics—*Perumkathai*, *Jīvaka Cintāmaṇi* and *Cūḷāmaṇi*—have been discussed earlier. Several minor epics were also written by the Jains. But judging the Jain epic writing by modern standards of poetic criticism, one concludes that it was a failure.

Four of the 18 *Kīlkkaṇakku*, we have seen, were Jain didactic works, of which *Nāladi* and *Paḷamoḷi* (old sayings) would be the pride of any language from the point of view of their sublime thoughts, their poetic form and their artistic presentation. In *Aṟaneṟiccāram* (Essence of Dharma Marga, 13th century), another good poetic piece, its Jain author provides some rules for human conduct. The Jain didactic writers have been remarkably successful.

Among Jain religious writing in Tamil, *Jīva Sambōdaṅa*, a rare *campu kāvya*, is a good piece of poetry. *Tiru Nūṟṟantādi*, a devotional poem (14th century) by Avirōdhi Āḷvāṟ, is an unusually fine poetic piece.

As for Buddhist Tamil writing, except for the remarkable epic *Maṇimēkhalai*, no other poetic work is available. Some stray verses have been quoted by commentators from books lost. A Buddhist wrote a grammar, *Vīra Śōḷiyam*, in the days of Vira Rajendra Chola. He adopted the fivefold classification for Tamil grammar with the avowed purpose of pushing the Tamil language into the Sanskrit mould, but failed.

Minor Poems (Pṛabandhas)

Minor poems often rank equal with such major writing as epic poetry, didactic writing and devotional poetry. The term *Pṛabandham* (well-composed) has been applied to such poems from very early times (the modern term is *śiṟṟilakkiyam*, minor literature). The minor poem can deal with either *aham* or *puṟam* or both. A few important types are mentioned below.

Āṟṟuppaḍai: Sangham poetry has five poems of this type in *Pattuppāṭṭu*. This type of poem is sung by a poet, bard or dancer, who has displayed his or her talent before a patron and received presents, and who now directs with these words similar artists to the presence of that patron. The *āṟṟuppaḍai* is a single long verse, containing many pen-portraits and descriptions of the patron and his place, the welcome he offers, the rich presents he gives and the peace and joy that descend on the recipient. (*Tiru Muruhāṟṟuppaḍai* substitutes Lord Muruha in the place of an earthly patron).

Bharaṇi: This is *puṟam* poetry on the theme of war and battle. The most famous poem is *Kaliṅgattup-paraṇi*, describing the victory of Kulottunga I over the north Kalingas in 1105. It is in about 600 couplets, mostly in lilting rhythmic metre, the sound and pace of the metre varying with the events. The king's march to the front, the battle and the battlefield are all described in gruesome detail. Battle, however, gives place, in later poetry, to an allegorical battle between the forces of darkness (ignorance) and light (knowledge).

Kōvai is a poem of 400 verses. It links the various love themes mentioned by Tolkappiyar and others into a connected story-like narrative. *Tirukkōvai*, celebrating Naṭarāja at Chidambaram (wrongly attributed to Saint Māṇikkavācakar) is the most famous poem.

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Kalambakam: A poem of 110 verses, in all the different metres and on all possible subjects, both *aham* and *puṟam*. The first poem of this type, by an unknown author, is on Nandi Varma Pallava III (825–850) who, legends say, gave up his life after listening to this exquisite poem in his praise.

Piḷḷai-Tamil: Such poems are usually in 100 long verses divided into 10 decads, each decad celebrating the childhood of the deity or patron, in the odd months from three to 21. Each decad celebrates one particular stage, like *kāppu* (prayer for protection), *seṅkīrai* (the first lisping), *sappāṇi* (clapping the hands) and so on. The 10 verses in each decad have the same refrain, occasionally two. The subject matter of the last three decads is different for males and females. The first *Piḷḷai-Tamil* poem was written by Ōṭṭakkūttar about his patron, the Chola emperor Kulottunga II. There are now more than a hundred such poems on gods, kings, chiefs, patrons, preceptors and poets. But the convention has been not to write such a poem on any aspect of Siva, as He is the Supreme Being who cannot be reduced to the concept of a child.

Ulā, Maḍal and Dūtu: These are love-poems on deities or patrons, written as long *kaliveṇbā* poems. Cheraman Perumal wrote, around A.D. 700, the first *ulā* on Siva, saying that He came out in a procession and the women of the seven stages came out, looked at him and fell in love with Him.

Maḍal is a theme in Sangham *aham* poetry where the frustrated lover proposes to give up his life if his lady-love is not wedded to him. It has been laid down there that women should not resort to this threat. But Tiru Mangai Alvar sang two *maḍal* poems wherein a woman proposes to give up her life if her Lord does not accept her love and return it. (This is most unusual but acceptable in the case of an Alvar.)

Dūtu is the message of love sent by a lovesick woman to the Lord who is the object of her love. Her messenger is specified as a parrot, kuyil, peacock, cloud, swan, etc. which cannot, of course, convey any message. But the frenzy of love causes her to address these and that is the poem.

Later Prabandhams. Three kinds of poems of a dramatic type have been evolved in later years. The first is the *kuṟavañji* in which a *kuṟatti* (gipsy, soothsayer) appears, reads the hand of a girl pining for the love of her lord (usually the Lord of the local temple), gets presents and departs with her husband who arrives in search of her. This is a dramatic poem in three scenes. The whole poem is sung to music and dance. The most popular poem of this type is the *Kuṟṟāḷakkuṟavañji*, which deals with the hill tribes.

The *Paḷḷu* poem, about agricultural labourers, is equally popular. The element of dance is absent here, although it is used for some kind of *kummi*. The poem deals with the quarrels between the two wives of a paḷḷan (agricultural labourer). *Mukkūḍal paḷḷu*, in celebration of Lord Vishnu, is the most popular poem of this type.

Noṇḍi nāṭakam is a monologue in verse sung by a vagabond who had spent all his wealth on a public woman, was thrown out by her, took to stealing and had his limbs cut off for thieving. He appears on the stage as a lame man and narrates his ugly tale as he dances on one leg. His tale ends with the statement that by the grace of the local deity (in whose honour the poem is composed) his limbs have reappeared and he can live happily thereafter. The misdeeds of the rogue are a source of delight to the gallery and the poem is quite popular as a reading piece.

Fine musical compositions in good poetry were introduced in *kīrttanai* and *padam* form by Muttu Tandavar (1575–1675).

Translations. There have been some translations of Traditional Poetry from Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu and English. The Bhagavad Gita was translated into Tamil in the *viruttam* metre (by Sri Bhattanar, 13th century) on the orders of the Sankaracharya of the period. This translation has an advaitic bias. In the next century, Vadhikesari Alahiya Manavala Jiyar translated it into Tamil in the *veṇbā* metre, giving it a *viśiṣṭādvaita* bias.

Prabhulinga līlai (the sports of the Virasaiva leader Allama Prabhu) was translated from Kannada into Tamil poetry in the *viruttam* metre by Śivapṛakāśa Svāmi (17th century). It was very popular as a minor epic and immediately became a classic. The same writer also translated two philosophical works, *Siddhānta Śikhāmaṇi* and *Vedānta Cūḍāmaṇi*, from Kannada.

Vasu Caritram is probably the only work (a minor *kāvya*) translated from the Telugu language.

V. P. Subrahmanya Mudaliyar, a rich landowner of Tirunelveli district, translated some chapters of Milton's *Paradise Lost* in the conventional metre, closely adhering to the original while at the same time following the traditional Tamil poetic pattern.

Curiously enough there have been a few translations from Tamil into Sanskrit in the past. *Śivajñānabōdham*, the basic Tamil scripture for Saiva Siddhanta philosophy was translated into 12 couplets in Sanskrit by an anonymous writer probably in the 14th century. *Tiru Viḷaiyāḍal purāṇa* of Paramjothi Munivar (c. 1700) was translated into the Sanskrit language in the same century under the name of *Hālāsya Māhātmya*. Sekkilar's *Periya purāṇam* (12th century) was the subject of two translations into Sanskrit, one, the larger *Upamanyu Bhakta Vilāsam* by an unknown author (18th century) and the other, *Agastya Bhakta Vilāsam* (19th century) by one Hara Sarma.

Foreign Impact

Muslim Impact. The fratricidal wars between the two sons of Kulasekhara Pandya opened the doors of Madurai to

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Malik-kaffur, who established Muslim rule in 1310 in that great city of Tamil culture. With conquest came conversion. But those who were converted had all been Tamils, with a natural love of their mother tongue. Thus after the first wave of violence had blown over, their descendants were able to turn their attention to Tamil.

Umaruppulavar, the first name that occurs to one, has already been mentioned in connection with his *purāṇam* in 5,026 verses on the life of the Prophet. Many traditional minor poems were also written by a number of Muslim poets up to the 19th century. But the unique Muslim contribution has been the many ballad poems called *Paṭaippōr* (battle accounts) which glorify the battles of the Prophet and his followers in Arabia. Abdul Majid wrote a manual of Muslim ethics called *Acārakkōvai*.

Mastan Sahib (early 19th century) of Gunankudi is a great name in the Muslim literary world. He is considered a sufi and his songs are almost a paraphrase of Tayumanavar. He is so soaked in the Hindu customs around him that he does not make much distinction between the gods of the Hindu pantheon and the Muslim saints.

Christian Impact. The Christian impact on Tamil writing began with the Portuguese and continued with the Danes, the Dutch, the French and the British. They were responsible for the introduction of printing and for distributing prose material written in a manner the layman could understand. This enabled prose to develop and helped to free Tamil from the shackles of orthodox Panditdom.

Some of these foreigners learnt the Tamil language well and made significant contributions to the growth of the language. Beschi, Caldwell, Winslow and Pope were some of those who had an impact on Tamil. Of these, the Italian priest Beschi (1680–1747) was the earliest. Apart from his grammatical and prose works, he demands attention for his contribution to Tamil poetry. He wrote a large Christian poetical work, *Tēmbāvaṇi* (The Insatiable Beauty) on the life of St. Joseph in collaboration with Supradipa Kavi.

Among the Christian Tamils who wrote significant poetry were Vedanayakam Pillai (Vēdanāyakam Piḷḷai) and Krishna Pillai. Vedanayakam, a munsif in government service, is considered the first Tamil novelist. But he is also the author of two important poetical works. One is *Nītinūl*, a book of ethical maxims (in verse), full of fine ideas but poor poetry; the other is his book of musical composition called *Sarva Samaya Samarasa Kīrtanai* (a common music book for all religions), a work that is not musically great because he was not well versed in music. Krishna Pillai, a Vaishnava scholar and a good versifier, turned Christian when he was 30 and made a metrical translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, calling it *Rakṣaṇya Yātṛikam*.

Conclusion

This panoramic view of Traditional Poetry in the Tamil language covers a period of over 20 centuries. All writing was only poetry till the very last century of the period. Available literature started with isolated verses and passed through various epochs of epic writing, didactic writing, devotional writing, religious writing, and minor poetic writing. Through all these periods, certain features stand out. Romance and heroism, common to all literatures, play their part in early literature. Sanskrit influence was not a strangling one on the already highly developed literature of Tamil; it served as a handmaid. Poets were always an independent tribe; although they thrived under patronage, they did not lose their identity, however great the patronage. They always stood for values such as *aṟam* (virtue), *poruḷ* (wealth), *inbam* (pleasure) and *viḍu* (release). With the changing political and social environment, the emphasis shifted, but the goals of nobility of character, the virtue of giving, educated and cultured behaviour, chastity of women, respect for elders, independence of the spirit, and, above all, Truth and Honour were always held high. Religion was the core of all traditional writing and the ethics of the poet were not bound by space or time, but were universal, transcending time and space.

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Telugu

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Telugu literature is generally divided into six periods or ages, viz. (i) the Pre-Nannaya Period (c. 100–1020), (ii) the Age of the Puranas (1020–1400), (iii) the Age of Śrīnātha (1400–1510), (iv) the Age of the *Prabandhas* (1510–1600), (v) the Southern Period (1600–1820) and (vi) the Modern Period.

The Pre-Nannaya Period

The Pre-Nannaya period is roughly from the beginning of the Christian era to 1020. There is evidence that Telugu was in use from the 1st century, but inscriptions in Telugu are found from 575 only. The inscriptions of the Rēnāṭi Chōlās and the Eastern Chalukyas were in Telugu mixed with *Prākṛt* words. Gradually *Prākṛt* words were substituted by Sanskrit (Saṅskṛt) words, and Telugu attained by the end of the 9th century the form that resembles the Telugu of Nannaya's *Bhārata*. Some of the inscriptions of the Eastern Chalukya period are in the form of verses and the Addanki inscription of Paṇḍaranga (848) is the first inscription which contains a verse in *Taruvōja* (a metre in which each foot contains two dwipada feet). In the Kandukūru and Dharmavaram inscriptions, verses in the *Sīsa* metre are to be found. There are five *Madhyākkara* (an indigenous metre) verses in the Bezwada inscription of Yuddhamalla (934). In the Gūḍūru inscription of Viriyāla Kāmasāni, which is said to belong to 1000, there are three *campakamālās* and two *Utpalamālās* borrowed from Sanskrit. The verses in the inscriptions of the 9th and 10th centuries belong to the *Dēśi* type, which many scholars did not like. These scholars began to write verses of the *Mārga* (classical or higher, of Sanskritic origin) type, of which the Guduru inscription is an example.

As the verses in these inscriptions were written only to describe the exploits of heroes and the gifts made by kings, ministers and rich men, they do not contain any literary merit. Pālkuriki Sōmanādha (12th/13th century) mentions some *padas* belonging to the *Dēśi* (indigenous as opposed to *Mārga*) type in his *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra* and scholars are of the opinion that several such *padas* might have been written by poets in the Pre-Nannaya period. Some scholars hold that two or three Jain poets wrote good poetry towards the end of the Pre-Nannaya period, but these poems are not now available.

The Age of the Puranas

This is otherwise called the age of translation as most of the works written during this period are translations from Sanskrit. As the Vedas and the Puranas, which contain the tenets of Hinduism, are in Sanskrit, they were unintelligible to the common people. Moreover, the Buddhists and Jains began to learn the vernaculars, not only to propagate their religions among the people but also to convert them into their fold. Rājarājanarēndra (1022–63), the Chalukya King who was a fervent follower of the Vedic religion, decided to get the Mahabharata, which is rightly called the *Pañcama Veda*, translated into Telugu, so that the people might understand the greatness of the Vedic religion. He chose this work because it describes the story of the Pandavas, his ancestors, who belonged to the Lunar race. He requested Nannaya (11th century), his friend and Kula Brāhmaṇa, who was a great scholar and a poet, to translate Vyasa's Bharata into Telugu.

In those times, the Telugu vocabulary was not rich enough to vividly express the ideas contained in such a great work and Nannaya at first hesitated to take up the translation. But he could not say 'no' to the request of his king and friend. He formulated exhaustive rules for using almost all the Sanskrit words in Telugu and began trans-

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ing the great work with the help of his classmate, Nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭa, another great scholar and poet. Nannaya is called the 'Ādikavi' in Telugu, because he was the first poet to write a standard work on an exalted theme in chaste language conforming to the rules of grammar. He completed the *Ādi* and *Sabha Parvas* and died after writing 3 cantos and 142 verses of the *Āraṇya Parva*. The birth of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Pandu and their sons, Draupadi's Swayamvara, the marriage of Subhadra and Arjuna, the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest, Māyāsabha, Rājasūya, the killing of Śiśupāla, the gambling match, the exile of the Pandavas, Kirātarjunīya and Saugandhikāpaharaṇa are the important events relating to the main story that were written by Nannaya. Besides these, the stories of Ruru and Pramadvara, Yayāthi, Garuḍa, Śakuntaḷa and Duṣyanta, Naḷa and Damayanti are important *Upākhyānas* narrated by him. While translating Vyasa's Bharata, Nannaya introduced some additions and omissions here and there, though he followed the story of the original closely. He made a few changes for the sake of propriety. The method adopted by him was afterwards followed by Tikkana and Yerrāpragaḍa. That is why the Telugu *Bhārata* appears more an original composition than a mere translation. Nannaya wrote the following verse in the *Avatārika* about the qualities of his composition.

> While intelligent poets praise the meaningful and vivid narration of the stories and while others are attracted by the beauty of diction, Nannaya who is a treasure of beautiful moral sayings, has composed the Mahabharata Samhita for the good of the world. (tr.)

Though he makes use of many Sanskrit words and compounds, Nannaya's style is very flowing and dignified. In addition to metres such as *Campakamālā*, *Śārdūla*, *Mattēbha*, *Utpalamālā*, etc. he also uses *Dēśi* metres such as *Taruvōja* and *Madhyākkara*. He is also considered an adept in prose. All the Telugu poets who succeeded him regarded him as their guide and guru.

Virasaivism. After the death of Nannaya there was a kind of social and religious revolution in the Telugu country. Basavēśwara, the Minister of Bijjala, founded Virasaiva religion, which considers Bhakti towards Siva as the only means of attaining salvation and which does not recognize either the authority of the Vedas or the caste system. He propagated Virasaivism in the Kannada country. It gradually spread to the Telugu country also and many people, including several great poets, were attracted to it and adopted it. As a result, nobody attempted to continue the composition of the Mahabharata begun by Nannaya, which gave much stress to Vedic religion, and it took nearly two centuries to complete Nannaya's work. The interim period between Nannaya and Tikkana, who continued the translation, is generally called the 'Age of the Virasaiva Poets'.

Virasaiva Poets. The first Saiva poet in Telugu is Nannechoda (Nannechōḍa), who, it is believed, lived in the first half of the 12th century. He was a great devotee of Siva though he was not a Virasaiva. He wrote *Kumārasambhava* which contains 12 cantos. The birth of Gaṇēswara, the love episode of Pārvati and Paramēśwara, the birth of Kumāraswāmi and the killing of the demon Tāraka by him, form the main theme of this work. Though Nannechoda borrowed some ideas from Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhava*, his work may be considered the first original poem in Telugu. His descriptions are vivid, natural and display the indigenous tradition. The conversations between Rati and Manmadha and between Parvati and Siva, in the form of the Brahmachari, are testimony to his skill in writing beautiful dialogues. When Manmadha goes to Siva's ashram to make him fall in love with Parvati, Rati dissuades him, saying:

> His (Siva's) bow is Mēru, the golden mountain, and yours is the sugar cane. His arrow is Pāśupata and your arrows are flowers which fade away when touched. He is the great hero who destroyed the three *puras* whereas you trouble lovers who are in separation. The disparity between him and yourself is as great as that between an elephant and a mosquito. (tr.)

Nannechoda was the first poet to use the words *Dēśi*, *Mārga* and *Vastukavita* (descriptive poetry), which he might have borrowed from Kannada literature. He dedicated his work to his Guru Jangama Mallikārjuna. His style is a little different from that of Nannaya. He tried to give up Sanskrit compounds as far as possible and to use *Jānu Tenugu* (a simple form of Telugu) which contains many idiomatic and beautiful expressions. He was not only fond of figures of speech and sense but also of *Bandhakavita*. Variety of metre is also seen in his work. In spite of some ungrammatical usages and compounds, he deserves the title 'Kavirājaśikhāmaṇi' on account of the richness of his imagination and his exalted and flowing style.

Mallikārjuna Pandithārādhya (1120–80) wrote *Śivatatva Sāra* (12th century, published in 1918) in addition to many other works, some of which might have been in Kannada. *Śivatatva Sāra* contains more than four hundred *Kanda* verses ending with the words 'Śivā', 'Aja', 'Rudra' or 'Mahēśa' in the vocative case. It is said to be the first *Śataka* in Telugu in spite of its number of verses. In it, the poet describes in detail the *Śiva Dīkṣa* and the tenets of Pāśupata Saivism and refutes the *Mayāvāda* of the *Advaitins*. He quotes many lines from the Vedas and tries to explain them to suit the Dwaitha system. Notwithstanding some peculiarities in the usage of words and alliteration, his style

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resembles that of Nannaya in many ways. He appears to conform to tradition in religion as well as style.

Palkuriki Sōmanātha occupies a very high position among Virasaiva poets as well as among Dwipāda poets. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada and composed works in all the three languages. Of them *Basava Purāṇam*, *Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra*, *Chennamallu Sīsamulu*, *Vṛṣādhipa Śataka* and *Basavōdāharaṇa* are Telugu works. *Basava Purāṇam* mainly describes the life of Basavēśvara, though contextually the stories of other devotees of Siva, such as Bejja Mahādēvi, Kaṇṇappa, Sūrasānamma and Ciruṭoṇḍanambi, are also narrated. The supernatural actions of Basavēśvara and other Saivites are vividly described in this work. *Basava Purāṇam* is very popular not only in Andhra but also in the Kannada country and is translated into Sanskrit, Tamil and Kannada. Even in Telugu it has three adaptations in verse form.

Paṇḍitārādhya Caritra narrates the life of Mallikarjuna Panditārādhya, a great Saiva preceptor and also the author of *Śivatatva Sāra*. Though it is the last among the works of Sōmanātha, it is the foremost from the point of view of poetical merit. The main theme of this work is Pandita's victory over the Jains, Bauddhas and the Charvakas in the Court of Velnati Choda. It is divided into five *Pṛakaraṇās*, viz. Dīkṣa, Purātana, Vāda, Mahima and Parvata, and contains all the characteristic features of a *Mahākāvya*. It reveals the scholarship of Sōmanātha in various subjects such as music, dance, medicine, alchemy, etc. Some portions of *Śivatatva Sāra* are quoted verbatim in this work.

Vṛṣādhipa śataka is the first available *śataka* in Telugu containing all the characteristic features of a *śataka*. Sōmanātha wrote some verses in this in Tamil, Kannada, Marathi, Sanskrit and *Maṇipravāḷa*, perhaps to display his many-sided scholarship. Each verse in this *śataka* ends with the *makuṭa*, 'Basavā, Basavā, Basavā, Vṛṣādhipa'. Sōmanātha is also fond of *Jānu Tenugu*, like Nannechōda. He forgets himself when he describes Siva or Basaveśwara and his *dwipadas* flow like a mountain stream. He says in *Basava Purāṇam*:

> *Jānu Tenugu* is more popular and attractive than the language of the great *gadya* and *padya* compositions and I intentionally compose *dwipadas* in that language. Do not treat them lightly thinking that they are mere Telugu words but consider them as valuable as the *Vedas*. (tr.)

He does not hesitate to use popular words, phrases and compounds though they do not conform to established rules. The indigenous theme, the *Dēśi* metre, the popular language and the beautiful descriptions found in the works of Sōmanātha give them extraordinary beauty and exquisite charm.

Tikkana. The Andhra country was in chaos over religion during the 12th century, as the Saivite Vaishnavite animosity grew. There was a great necessity for somebody to bring the two sects together. Tikkana (1210–90), the great poet and friend and minister to Manumasiddhi, the king of Nellore, undertook the mission. He dedicated his greatest work, the *Bhārata*, to Hariharanatha, a combined form of Siva and Vishnu in order to impress on the minds of the contending Saivites and Vaishnavites that there is no difference between Siva and Vishnu.

Tikkana's first literary effort was *Nirvacanōttara Rāmāyaṇa*, which does not contain any prose, as the name indicates. He dedicated it to Manumasiddhi. This work is a free translation of Valmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa Uttarakāṇḍa*, and contains the birth stories of Rāvaṇa and others, the exile of Sita, the birth of Kusa and Lava and the killing of the demons by Vishnu. In the portion where Rama abandons Sita, *karuṇarasa* (compassion) is skilfully delineated. Tikkana omitted the portion which describes the death of Rama. Jayanti Ramabhatta, later, wrote it in a single canto. Tikkana's greatest service to Telugu literature, however, is his translation of the 15 *parvas*, beginning with the *Virāṭaparva*, of the Mahabharata. He was an expert in depicting various *rasas*, characterization and observing propriety. He performed a sacrifice and became a Sōmayaji before he began to translate the Mahabharata. He followed Nannaya in the method of translation. One deviation Tikkana made from the original for the sake of propriety should be noted. Vyasa describes the fight between Bhima and Kichaka in a full chapter wherein he narrates that the trees and houses fell down, that the earth shook and produced a horrible sound. Tikkana omitted these *ślokas* and wrote just one small verse, saying that both of them fought silently.

> Kichaka was afraid that somebody might know him and Bhima was afraid that he might be recognized in the *Ajñātavāsa* and so both of them fought without producing any sound, striking each other silently. (tr.)

This verse shows the care which Tikkana took in observing propriety, even if it meant deviating from the original.

Tikkana's knowledge of politics is evident in *Udyōgaparva* wherein Krishna plays the part of a political ambassador. A minister himself, he describes the various battle scenes in the Mahabharata in a vivid and detailed manner and makes them interesting. His descriptions are natural and speak much for his powers of observation and worldly knowledge. Critics find in these descriptions the influence of Nannechoda. Tikkana's own style is dramatic and his dialogue full of vigour and life. Draupadi's feelings, when she narrates the insults she suffered at the hands of the Kauravas before Krishna started for Hastinapura to negotiate, are described by Tikkana thus:

> Draupadi suddenly untied her graceful braid and taking the hair which resembled a black cobra in her right hand

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and not being able to bear the grief and anger that were overflowing in her mind stood up in despair while tears were rolling down her eyes. (tr.)

Tikkana adopted the *Dēśi* style and used idiomatic Telugu words instead of complicated Sanskrit compounds to make his poem intelligible to all the Telugu people, learned and otherwise. He is the first poet in Telugu to prove that abstruse spiritual ideas can be expressed in a powerful way in simple Telugu words. His style changes according to the sentiments he describes. His place in Telugu literature is unique.

Contemporaries of Tikkana. Mūlaghaṭika Kētana (1225–90), who bore the title 'Abhinava Daṇḍi', was a friend of Kavibrahma Tikkana. He translated Dandi's *Daśakumāra Carita* (written in 1255; pub. 1910), a Sanskrit prose work in *campu* form, and dedicated it to Tikkana. It contains many adventure stories full of *Sṛṅgāra* and *Hāsya* sentiments. Ketana's skill in narrating the stories is well demonstrated in this work. His other works include *Vijñānēśvara* (1260; pub. 1918), a work on the Dharmaśāstra, and *Āndhra Bhāṣabhūṣaṇam* (1270; pub. 1920), the first Telugu grammar written in Telugu verse.

Marana (Mārana, 1230–90) was Tikkana's disciple and translated the *Mārkaṇḍēya Purāṇa* which contains the sources of the stories in *Manucaritra*, *Hariścandrōpākhyāna* and *Kuvalayaśvacaritra*, which are famous *prabhandhas*. His style is simple, yet powerful and pleasant. Adharvaṇācārya (13th century), who is said to have translated the Bharata from *Virāṭaparva* and Badde Bhūpāla (1220–80), the author of *Nītisāra Muktāvali*, also belong to this age.

The first Ramayana that was written in Telugu is the *Raṅganātha Rāmāyaṇa*, the authorship of which is controversial. Many critics hold that it was written by Gona Buddha Reddy (1200–60) in the name of his father Vithala Kṣmānātha. This poem written in *dwipada* metre follows the story of Valmiki's Ramayana. But the author intersperses some stories that are not there in the original Ramayana. Among them are the stories of Jambumāli, Kālanēmi and Sulōchana. The poet delineates the characters of Ravana, Vibhīṣaṇa, Kumbhakarṇa and others excellently. His descriptions are dignified and style chaste and simple. Though written in *dwipada* it has a very high place in Telugu literature because of its bright and flowing style. The *Uttarakāṇḍa* of this Ramayana is written by his sons Kācha and Vittala, who, as poets, do not reach the standards of their father.

Yerrana. The third poet who worked on translating the Mahabharata was Yerrapragada (Yerrāpragada; first half of the 14th century). He completed the latter portion of the *Āraṇyaparva*, which Tikkaṇa did not attempt. This portion he dedicated to Rājarājanarendra, and wrote in the *Gadyas* that it was written by Nannaya himself. He begins with the style of Nannaya and concludes with that of Tikkana, so that the portion written by him can rightly be called the bridge that links the writings of the two great poets. *Ghōṣayātra*, the stories of Rama and Sāvitri, and the portion where the Yaksha questions Dharmarāja and gets suitable answers, are some of the important portions in Yerrana's Bharata. Yerrana, who had specifically stated that he would write in a style that would seem to be that of Nannaya, describes the elephants in autumn thus:

> In the forest, herds of intoxicated elephants appeared as if the group of clouds of the rainy season came down to the earth being afraid of the autumn season, while the flowing rut seemed to be a stream of water and the *Bṛmhita* sound seemed to be the loud sound of thunder. (tr.)

The following verse contains answers given by Dharmarāja to questions put by the Yaksha:

> A mother is heavier than the earth. The father is higher than the sky. Mind goes quicker than the air, and grief is more thick than grass. (tr.)

The second major work by Yerrana is the translation of Valmiki's Ramayana, which is now not available. Yerrana's poetry reached perfection in his third work *Harivamśa* which is also a translation from the Sanskrit. It describes in detail the story of the dynasty of Hari (Krishna). While dealing with Gōkula he describes rural life sensitively and while narrating the stories of Rukmini and Usha he displays great skill in depicting pure love. His last work, *Lakṣminṛsimhapurāṇa*, deals mainly with the story of Prahlāda. Taking the story from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, he has added several descriptions in appropriate places and made it look a *prabandha*. Yerrana makes equal use of Sanskrit and Telugu words. His style is simple, chaste and flowing and is renowned for *Sūktivaichitri* (beauty of using good and idiomatic words). Yerrana has been bestowed the titles 'Prabandhaparamēśwara' and 'Śambhudāsa'.

Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇa (13th century) is one of the important works written during this period. It is the work of four authors, viz. Hulakki Bhaskara, his son Mallikarjuna Bhattu, disciple Kumara Rudra Deva and friend Ayyalarya. As Bhaskara is senior to the others, not only in age but also in scholarship, the poem is named after him. Some critics are of the opinion that Bhaskara, the grandfather of Tikkana, wrote a very brief Ramayana, but not being satisfied with it Hulakki Bhaskara and the others added some verses to it, following Valmiki's Ramayana, and gave shape to the present work. The style of the *Bhāskara Rāmāyaṇa* lacks uniformity and appears to have been written by several authors. Hulakki Bhaskara (13th century) wrote the whole of the *Āraṇyakāṇḍa* and 1133 verses of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

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He dedicated the latter to Sahini Mara (1295–1335), who was a commander of the cavalry of Prataparudra Deva II. Mallikarjuna Bhattu wrote *Bālakāṇḍa*, *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* and *Sundarakāṇḍa*. The portion wherein Tāra, the wife of Vāli weeps for her dead husband, is full of *Karuṇarasa* (compassion). Kumara Rudra Deva is fond of brevity and the *Ayōdhyakāṇḍa* written by him is well known for its succinct presentation of ideas and the sweetness of its language. Ayyalarya (1295–1350) completed the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* that Bhaskara had started. Ayyalarya's style is full of Sanskrit compounds, which is quite in conformity with the *vīra rasa* that is prominent in the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*.

Nachana Somanatha. Nachana Somanatha is a younger contemporary of Yerrana. He wrote the latter part of the *Harivamśa*, calling it the *Uttara Harivamśa* and dedicated it to god Hariharanātha, as Tikkana had done before him. It is not clear whether he wrote the first part too. For *Uttara Harivamśa*'s six cantos, Somanatha selected the most beautiful stories from the original and introduced some additional descriptions so as to make it seem an independent work. He describes in detail the story of Hamsa and Dibhaka which was left out by Yerrana. The conversation between Urvaśi and Narakāsura in the first canto and the love episode involving Usha and Aniruddha in the last two cantos are good examples of his expertise in depicting *śṛṅgāra rasa*. In the battle between Narakāsura and Krishna, in which Satyabhāma also plays an important part, there is an excellent blending of *śṛṅgāra* and *vīra* sentiments. In describing the battles, Somanatha appears to follow the methods of Tikkana. In weaving his stories and in several descriptions he forsakes the puranic method and adopts the *prabandha* style which influenced later poets. He has been bestowed many titles, namely, 'Sarvajña', 'Sakalabhāṣābhūṣana', 'Sāhitya Rasapōsana', 'Samvidhāna Cakravarti' and 'Navīna Guṇasanātha', all of which he richly deserves.

The following verse is a good example of Somanatha's skill in creating interesting situations. When Naraka expresses his love to Urvaśi, she wants to escape and tells him:

> Indra has been defeated by you and you have become the lord of all his wealth. All the divine damsels are always in your service and as I am one of them how can I escape from you? But why should you have the defect of not being the Lord of the sacrifices that are performed by the great sages? (tr.)

Naraka is convinced and goes to ask the sages why they have not given him a portion of the offerings made to the gods as sacrifices. The sages complain to Krishna, who promises to kill Naraka. Thus a situation is created by Urvaśi to escape from the amorous Naraka. The diction of Somanatha abounds in figures of speech and long compounds and is a good example of *Ojoguṇa* (strength). The proverbs and idiomatic phrases which he uses are charming. Though he equals Yerrana in the delineation of *rasas*, he falls short of Yerrana's propriety.

Chimmapudi Amareswara (14th century), the author of *Vikramasēnamu*, Vinnakota Peddana (14th century), the author of *Kāvyālaṅkāra Cūḍāmaṇi*, Vemulavada Bhimakavi who is said to be a very great poet but whose works are not available, Manchana (1330–85), the author of *Kēyūrabāhu Caritra* (published in 1948) and Ravipati Tripurantaka (14th century)—the author of *Tripurāntakōdāharaṇa* (1340; pub. in 1930) are among the poets who lived in this period and enriched Telugu literature with their works. *Kēyūrabāhu Caritra* is an adaptation of *Viddha Sālabhañjika*, a Sanskrit drama written by Rajasekhara. Manchana has introduced many beautiful and interesting stories in this work, which is the first instance of adopting a Sanskrit drama in Telugu not in the form of a drama but in the form of a *campu kāvya*.

The Age of Srinatha

During this period, some Telugu poets translated Sanskrit poems and dramas while others attempted original narrative poems. Translation of the puranas also continued. The works written during this age helped to pave the way for the development of the popular Telugu literary form called the *prabandha*. The foremost poet of this period is Srinatha (Śrīnātha, 1365–1441), who is next only to the *Kavitraya* (Poetic Trinity) both in scholarship and poetic talent. He lived in the court of the Reddi kings and acted as Vidyadhikari. He defeated the famous logician, Gowḍa Ḍiṇḍimbhaṭṭa, and was honoured with 'kanakābhiṣēka' in the court of Devaraya II, and with the title 'Kavisārvabhouma'. Many of his works are, no doubt, translations, but the skill he displays in the art of translation is unparalleled. Of his works, *Maruttarātcaritra*, *Śālivāhana Saptaśati* and *Paṇḍitārādhyacaritra* are lost. *Śṛṅgāra Naiṣadha* is a translation of *Naiṣadham*, the famous Sanskrit poem of Sri Harsha, and is considered a model for later *prabandhas*. It deals with the marriage of Nala and Damayanti. He has stated that he translated the poem observing all the proprieties, following the words, retaining the figures of speech and not deviating from the original. In the Sanskrit poem, the swan tells Damayanti that it would fan Nala with its wings while he sported with the ladies. Srinatha might have felt it was improper on the part of the swan to mention Nala's sporting with the ladies to Damayanti and so translates the verse thus:

> Having come down from the golden mountain and after swimming for some time in the waters of the heavenly Ganges, we will be fanning him with our cool golden

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wings that are like the *chowris* in the hot summer days. (tr.)

This poem bears testimony to his extraordinary scholarship, grand style and exquisite poetic talent.

Bhīmakāṇḍa and *Kāśikāṇḍa* are *Kṣētramāhātmyas* by Srinatha dealing with the greatness of Bhimeswaram near Samalkota and Varanasi (Kāśi) respectively. The source for both these works is the *Skandapurāṇa*. In *Bhīmakaṇḍa*, Srinatha displays his love of the Telugu country by vividly describing the river Godavari and the various places through which it flows. The stories of Vyasa leaving Kasi, also described in *Kāśīkāṇḍa*, and Siva swallowing poison are excellently narrated in this work. Vindhya Garvāpaharaṇa, the stories of Guṇanidhi and Suśīla, are interesting narratives in *Kāśīkāṇḍa*.

Other works by Srinatha include *Haravilāsa*, which describes the stories of Chirutonḍa Nambi, the marrigae of Siva and Parvati (this is a condensed translation of the first half of Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhava*), *Dārukāvanavihara*, *Hālāhalabhakṣaṇa Kirātārjuniya* and *Śivarātrimāhātmy* (1440; 2nd ed., 1966), the story of Sukumāra which resembles that of Guṇanidhi. *Palnāṭivīracaritra* (1468; pub. 1921), a poem in *dwipada* metre, describes the valour of the heroes of Palnādu in Guntur district and shows that Srinatha is an expert not only in the dignified and mature style appreciated by scholars but also in the simple, *Dēśi* style that appeals to ordinary people. Besides these works, Srinatha composed many *chātu*, or occasional verses, which are very popular in the Telugu country. His style, though it contains more Sanskrit words, is fluent and his *Sīsa* verses are famous for the grandeur of their flow.

Potana. Potana (Pōtana, 1450–1510), the great religious poet is a younger contemporary of Srinatha. Besides *Bhōginidaṇḍakam* and *Vīrabhadravijaya*, which describe the destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice by Vīrabhadra, he translated the Sanskrit Bhagavata into Telugu. It is no exaggeration to say that every literate Andhra can recite one or two verses from his Bhagavata, which so overflows with sweetness that it stands as proof of the innate mellifluousness of the Telugu language. It contains all the characteristics of a purana and describes the 21 *avatāras* of Lord Vishnu, of which 10 are well known. The stories of Gajēndramōkṣa, Vāmana, Ambarīṣa, Prahlāda, Rama and Kuchēla are skilfully narrated by Potana. In the 10th *skandha* he describes the *Madhura Bhakti* (devotion full of love) of the Gopikas and makes the whole *skandha* seem a lyric in which he gives vent to his personal feelings.

Though this work is a translation, Potana has added many verses of his own wherever Bhakti is predominant. Gajēndra's *stotra* and Prahlāda's disclosure on the efficacy of Bhakti are examples. His style is full of Sanskrit words and compounds and abounds in figures of speech. His *Antyānuprāsas* (end-rhymes) and use of sweet words make his style extremely musical. His descriptions are naturalistic and his ideas magnanimous. When Sukra dissuades Bali from granting three feet of land to Vāmana, saying that he is not a real dwarf, Bali replies:

> It is not desirable that the hand which shines with fresh lustre first on the braid of Lakshmi, then on her body,
> next on the upper garment of her shoulder, and afterwards on her lotus-like
> feet, on her cheeks and on her breasts respectively will be below
> while mine is over it and is this kingdom eternal and body everlasting? (tr.)

It is stated that as some parts of Potana's Bhagavata 'manuscript' were destroyed by white ants, these portions were afterwards filled in by Gangana (Skanda V), Singana (Skanda VI) and Naraya (Skandas XI and XII), who were either his disciples or friends. Potana dedicated his work to Sri Rama to whom he was devoted and, though he was poor, he refused the entreaties of kings and ministers, who wanted him to dedicate the work to one of them.

Jakkana and Others. Jakkana (second half of the 14th century) is the author of *Vikramārkacaritra* (1390; pub. c. 1925) which describes the wonderful deeds of Vikramārka, whose name is connected with a Śaka. This original narrative poem demonstrates the interest people had in such adventurous deeds. Jakkana's narration and his descriptions of the seasons and the Śrīśaila Kṣētra are praiseworthy.

Besides *Rasābharaṇa* and *Anantuni Chandassu*, Anantamatya (1400–55) wrote *Bhōjarājīya* which, like *Vikramārkacaritra*, is an original narrative poem that tells several stories about King Bhōja. Each of these stories has a moral to convey. *Gōvyāghrasamvāda*, a tale full of *karuṇa rasa* and very popular in Andhra, is a particularly outstanding story included in this poem, which reveals Anantamatya's sweet and simple style.

Gaurana (first half of the 15th century) wrote two poems, in Telugu; *Hariścandrōpākhyāna* and *Navanāthacaritra* in *dvipada* metre, and a work on prosody in Sanskrit, *Lakṣaṇadīpika*. He is the first poet to attempt the story of Harischandra in Telugu. He took the skeleton of the story from the Mārkaṇḍēya and the Skanda Puranas and embellished it with several beautiful descriptions. *Navanāthacaritra* describes the stories of the Siva Yogis of whom Mīnanātha is well known. Gaurana relates how Mīnanatha saved Sārangadhara, said to be the son of Rajaraja, when his hands and feet were cut off. He then converted him into a Siddha. Gaurana's style is full of proverbs and idioms. Though it is in *dvipada*, it does not vex the readers. Gaurana's stories about Kālakauśika and Vanchaka

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Purōhita are examples of his outstanding ability to handle humour.

Another famous poet of this age is Pillalamarri Pinavirabhadra (Pillalamaṛṛi Pinavīrabhadra, latter half of the 15th century). Of the many works said to have been written by him, *Śṛṅgāraśakuntaḷamu* and *Jaimini Bhāratam* are the only ones available. *Śṛṅgāraśakuntaḷamu* describes the marriage of Dushyanta and Sakuntala. The poet took the story from *Bharata* and Kalidasa's drama and introduced some innovations of his own. He also translated many important *ślokas* from *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* and included them in his work. Like *Śṛṅgāra Naiṣadha* of Srinatha, *Śṛṅgāraśākuntaḷamu* also became a model for the later *prabandhas*. *Jaimini Bhārata* is a Telugu translation of the *Aśvamēdha Parva* of the Bharata, said to have been written by Jaimini, one of the disciples of Vyasa. The main theme of this work is how Bhīma and Arjuna follow the sacrificial horse and defeat all those who tried to impede it. There are many other interesting stories in this work, of which the stories of the sage Uddālaka, Chandrahāsa, Pramīla, Babhruvāhana and Kuśa and Lava, deserve mention. Pinavirabhadra's style attained maturity in this poem though the impact of the style of Srinatha is seen in many places. It is said that while writing this work, the author declared that 'Vani (Goddess Saraswati) is my Queen'.

Nandi Mallaya and Ghanta Singana (latter half of the 15th century) are the first twin poets in Telugu. *Prabōdhacandrōdaya* and *Varāhapurāṇa* are their best-known works. *Prabōdhacandrōdaya* is a translation of the Sanskrit drama of *Kṛṣṇamiśra* in the form of a *Śravya Kāvya*. This is the second instance where a Sanskrit drama has been translated in this form of poetry. Kāma, Krōdha, Lōbha, Vivēka, Sraddha, Vishnubhakti, Upanishaddevi, etc. are the main characters in this work, which describes the conflict between good and evil in the human heart and the ultimate defeat of evil. The victory of Viveka and the birth of Prabodhachandra are beautifully described. The poets display great skill in expressing clearly even the most complicated philosophical ideas. As the major portion of the Sanskrit *Varāhapurāṇa* is about the efficacy of the *vṛatas* and rituals, the poets have selected only a few attractive stories, added beautiful descriptive passages here and there, and followed the *prabandha* method in composing their work. The stories of King Durjaya, Arjunaki, a Bhilla woman, the sage Gautama and the marriage of Gauri are absorbing. The styles of both poets are so similar that the two poems mentioned appear to have been written by one person. Ghanta Singana has been given the title 'Malayamāruta Kavi'. Nandi Timmana, the author of the famous *Pārijātāpaharaṇa* is his nephew.

Other important poets of the age are Madiki Singana (15th century), the author of the *Uttara Khaṇḍa* (1420; pub. 1930) of *Padmapurāṇa*, *Vāsiṣṭha Rāmāyaṇa* and *Sakalanītisammata*, a compilation of the moral verses of several authors; Ḍaggupalli Ḍuggana, a disciple and brother-in-law of Srinatha and the author of *Nāchiketūpakhyāna* who took the story from the *Kaṭhōpaniṣad* and *Ānuśāsanika-parva* of the Mahabharata; Koravi Goparaju (1430-80), the author of *Simhāsanadwātrinsika* (1460; pub. 1938) which contains 32 beautiful stories narrated by the *Sālabhanjikas* (dolls) to King Bhoja while he was trying to gain the throne of Vikramarka; Dubagunta Narayana Kavi who translated the famous *Pañcatantra* in *campu* form, and Vennelakanti Surana who translated *Viṣṇupurāṇa* from Sanskrit in a style which is simple, compact and full of propriety.

The Prabandha Period

Prabandha is a popular literary form in Telugu. The age of Krishnadevaraya is also called the age of the *Prabandhas*. The word *prabandha* in Sanskrit is analogous to *kāvya*, but in Telugu it has a different connotation. It is a particular type of *kāvya* in which the theme is *prakhyāta* (well-known, i.e. taken from the puranas or the epics), the hero is a Dhīrōḍātta and the main rasa is *śṛṅgāra*. It contains the traditional 18 descriptions, five or six cantos, and makes use of a highly ornamental style, full of figures of speech of *artha* (meaning) and *śabda* (sound) types. Every verse of a *prabandha* displays great scholarship, poetic talent and craft. This age is generally called the golden age of Telugu literature on account of the great merit and the excellence of the *prabandhas* written in it.

Sri Krishnadevaraya. Krishnadevaraya (Kṛṣṇadēvarāya, 1485–1530), the greatest of the Vijayanagara emperors, was a great poet. He was given the title 'Āndhra Bhōja' because he patronized the famous Aṣṭadiggajas. Besides many works in Sanskrit, he wrote an excellent *prabandha* in Telugu, *Āmuktamālyada* (alias *Viṣṇuchittīyamu*), whose main theme is the divine love of Gōdādēvi and Śrīraṅgēśvara. Many beautiful stories pronouncing the supremacy of God Vishnu are narrated in it, of which stories Khāṇḍikya and Kēśidhwaja and Māladāsari and Yāmunachārya deserve mention. The skill exhibited by the emperor-poet in his descriptions, in the art of story-telling and in expressing beautiful and dignified ideas is quite extraordinary. The following verse is a good example of his powers of description and speaks much of his powers of observation:

> When the watchmen see the geese sleeping in the small tanks of the fields having inserted their heads in the wings and, mistaking them for the squeezed upper garments of the Brahmins who came in the morning to bathe, go down the bank to send them to their houses, the geese fly away quickly and the women protecting the paddy fields laugh at their error. (tr.)

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The Prabandha Poets

Allasani Peddana (Allasāni Peddana, 1470–1535) is the foremost of the famous Aṣṭadiggaja poets patronized by Sri Krishnadevaraya. He owes his eminence to his age, scholarship and poetic talent. He wrote *Svārōchiṣamanusambhava* (1519; pub. 1860) called *Manucaritra* for short, which is considered the best of the Telugu *prabandhas*.

Peddana took his theme from *Mārkaṇḍēyapurāṇa*, enlarged it with several beautiful descriptions and gave shape to a novel literary form. Varūdhini, a charming Gandharva girl, loves Pravara, an austere Brahmin youth who goes to see the Himalayas. Pravara rejects her love and returns home. Varudhini is left to pine for him. A Gandharva youth, who is in love with her but is not favoured by her, takes this opportunity, and comes to her in the form of Pravara and fulfils his desire. She becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son whom she names Swarochi. The boy marries Manōrama and also her friends Kalāvati and Vibhāvasi. Sporting delightfully with them he goes to the forest to hunt. There, Vanadēvata who loves him, comes to him in the form of a female deer and requests him to embrace her. He does so and she attains her natural form. To her is born Manu, who performs penance and receives boons from Lord Vishnu who asks him to rule the world for some years before coming to him to enjoy Sālōkya. As the stories of Swarōchi, Manōrama and her friends, and the story of Indīvarākṣa, the father of Manōrama, are also narrated in this work, scholars are of the opinion that it lacks unity of plot, which is a major characteristic of a *prabandha*.

Peddana introduces most of the 18 descriptions in his work and they are extremely beautiful. His style is clear and melodious. The first two cantos of his work are the most popular, particularly the pleasing dialogue between Varudhini and Pravara. When Pravara sees Varudhini playing the vina in the Himalayas and requests her to show him the way home, she replies suggestively: 'Oh! best of Brahmins, why do you ask the way while you have such broad eyes. This is nothing but a pretext to speak to youthful ladies who are in solitude.' The skill Peddana displays in delineating the characters of Pravara and Varūdhini and in creating conflict between the two sentiments *śṛṅgāra* and *śānta* is unparalleled. After *Bhārata* and *Bhāgavata*, this is the work that enjoys greatest popularity in the Telugu country. It is said that Peddana wrote another work, *Harikathāsāra*, but this has not been published yet.

Nandi Timmana (Nandi Timmana, 1475–1540), who is said to have come with Tirumaladēvi, one of the queens of Sri Krishnadevaraya, wrote *Pārijātāpaharaṇa* and dedicated it to Krishnadevaraya. The story of this *prabandha* is taken from *Harivamśa*. The important innovation introduced by the poet is that Satyabhāma kicks the head of Krishna when he falls at her feet to appease her anger, but even then Krishna is not incensed and speaks to her:

> I deem it an honour that you kicked me, your servant, with love-anger but I feel very much that your delicate lotus-like foot might have been distressed on account of the touch of the thorn-like bristling of my body. Even now, oh curly haired lady, you do not give up your anger. (tr.)

It is said that when Krishnadevaraya once stopped talking to Tirumaladēvi because of anger, Timmana introduced this change to indirectly teach his Lord how to cajole an angry lady. The first canto of this *prabandha* is full of *śṛṅgāra rasa* at which he is expert, and makes pleasant reading. The dignity and the anger of Satyabhāma are described with great skill in this canto. The other cantos, containing traditional descriptions, reveal Timmana's power of observation. The *prabandha* ends with *Puṇyakavṛta*, which is intended to deflate the pride of Satyabhāma. Timmana's style is so smooth, sweet and flowing that there is even a saying about it in Telugu 'Mukku Timmanāryu Muddu Paluku'—which means that 'the words of Timmana are charming'.

Madayagari Mallana (Mādayagāri Mallana 1480–1550) wrote a *prabandha*, *Rājaśēkhara Caritra* (c. 1515), and dedicated it to Appāmatya, the son-in-law of Timmarusu. The theme of this work is the marriage of prince Rajasekhara, the son of Hēmadhanva, to Kāntimati, the daughter of the king of Sind. Their go-between, a parrot given by the Goddess Kāḷi, became a model for Suchimukhi's message in Surana's *Prabhāvati Pradyumna*. The descriptions of Mallana are short and apt, his style simple. He describes the looks of the bride so:

> While the parrot sat nearby like the priest, and while strong desires crowded like the relatives, having set aside the curtain of bashfulness, her imagination poured over the prince like the shower of rice through which she beheld her groom, and closing her eyes, while the fire of separation was the witness. (tr.)

Dhurjati (Dhūrjaṭi, 1480–1545) wrote *Śrī Kālahasti Māhātmya*, which describes the greatness of that kṣētra, and *Śri Kālahastiśwara Śataka*, one of the best *śatakas* in Telugu literature. In the latter he repents his past conduct and derides the arrogance and amorous nature of kings. The poet, a great devotee of Siva, dedicated *Śrī Kālahasti Māhātmya* to Him. *Skandapurāṇa* is the source of the story for this *prabandha*. The poet says that not only human beings but also birds and animals attain *mōkṣa* by dint of their sincere devotion to Siva. The story of Tinna, the son of the king of the hillmen, who offered both his eyes to god Siva, and the story of Natkīra, a great poet who found fault with a verse written by Siva himself, are skilfully described by Dhurjati. Siva goes to the king's court and asks the poets:

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When I composed a verse that is sweet with great literary merit and sent it, Natkīra, it seems, heard it and maliciously found fault with it. Please show me where the fault lies, is it in the figure of speech, *rasa*, idiom or grammar? (tr.)

Dhurjati's style is pleasant and his descriptions of the life of hillmen, of famine and of the river Swarnamukhi are naturalistic. Like Potana, Dhurjati held that poetry is a divine art that should be used for worshipping God alone.

Ayyalaraju Ramabhadra (Ayyalarāju Rāmabhadra, 1480–1540) wrote *Rāmābhyudaya*, based on the story of the Ramayana, with traditional descriptions to make it appear a *prabandha*. He has used long Sanskrit compounds as well as simple Telugu words in his work. However, the part where the sage Visvamitra describes the beauty of Sita and also where the tricks of the damsels are described in the story of Ṛśyasṛṅga, Ramabhadra's work appears to lack propriety.

Pingali Surana (Pingāḷi Sūrana, 1520–80), who wrote three *prabandhas*, *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya* (1545), *Kalāpūrṇōdaya* (1550) and *Prabhāvatī Pradyumna* (1555), is included among the Aṣṭadiggajas though critics hold he lived in the latter half of the 16th century. His *Garuḍa Purāṇa* is now not available. He was a poet of great originality and each of his three major works possesses a kind of novelty. *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya* is a *Dvyarthi kāvya* which relates the stories of the Ramayana and the Bharata simultaneously. Surana displays his great scholarship in both Sanskrit and Telugu by making use of several kinds of *ślēṣa* in this work. He manages the theme in such a way as to suit the two meanings.

The *prabandha* that brought greatest fame to Surana is *Kalāpūrṇōdaya*, dedicated to Nandyala Krishnaraja, the story of which is entirely invented by him, quite against the tradition of the *prabandhas*. It resembles, in a way, that of *The Comedy of Errors* of Shakespeare who lived in the same century. The love story of Sugātri and Śālina is appealing, while in the story of Rambha and Nalakūbara he displays extraordinary skill in delineating their error. The dissension between the real and unreal Rambhas reveals clearly the natural animosity between two co-wives. Surana's characterization and delineation of the *rasas*, *śṛṅgāras* and human psychologies in this work are unparalleled.

Surana's third *prabandha* describes the marriage of Pradyumna, the son of Krishna, to Prabhavati, the daughter of Vajranābha, the Rākṣasa king. Though this is a *śravya prabandha*, it appears to be a drama on account of its beautiful dialogues. Surana displays great dexterity in describing Suchimukhi's love negotiations. The narrative style is simple but pleasant with plenty of proverbs and idioms. In describing human psychology he can be compared to Tikkana; in the use of *ślēsa* he is next to none. In the first canto of *Kalāpūrṇōdaya*, Kalabhasini praises the beauty of Manikandhara's poetry to Nārada thus:

If the beauty of the cool moonlight possesses fragrance, if pieces of camphor which have coolness and fragrance possess tenderness also, and if gentle breeze of the Malaya mountain which has coolness, fragrance and tenderness possesses sweetness also, then we can think that there is an equal match for the words of this great poet. (tr.)

Bhattumurti, alias Ramarajabhusana (Rāmarājabhūṣaṇa, 1500–70) was a youth during the reign of Krishnadevaraya and is so included among the *prabandha* poets. He was an expert in *Avadhānas* and extempore poetry. Of his three major works *Narasabhūpālīya*, a work of rhetoric modelled on *Pratāparudrīya* of Vidyanadha, *Vāsucaritra* and *Hariścandra Nalōpākhyāna*; *Vāsucaritra*, is not only the best work of the poet but is also among the best *prabandhas* written. The theme is the marriage of Vasumahārāja and Girika, a daughter of the river Suktimati and the mountain Kōlāhala. Bhattumurti took this story from the Bharata and enlarged it into a *mahāprabandha* by including various descriptions. Though the story does not appeal much to the average reader, the work is unparalleled in imagination, poetic talent, scholarship, *ślēṣa*, *dhvani* and the delineation of various *rasas*. Bhattumurti displays extraordinary skill in narrating the love story of Kōlāhala and Suktimati by attributing human qualities to the river and the mountain. A girl is born to Suktimati and she is named Girika by the sages.

Bhattumurti describes how the parents fondle the child with great affection:

When the mountain Kolahala throws off the garland of small conches thinking why the mother should put it around the child's neck which excels the conch in beauty and decorates it with a garland of precious jewels, the mother (river) removes it thinking that the child cannot bear its weight and substitutes it with ornaments made of red lotuses. (tr.)

The description of *viraha* in the third canto and of nature in various contexts is original and beautiful. The poet also creates some situations in the *prabandha* for dramatic effect. His style, though heavy, is musical and pleasant and the gait of his *sīsas* is melodious. *Vāsucaritra* was translated into Sanskrit and this fact bears testimony to its greatness. Many poets afterwards imitated *Vāsucaritra* and wrote works which are called 'Baby Vasucharitras'.

Bhattumurti's third work, *Hariścandra Nalōpākhyāna*, is a *dvyarthi kāvya* like *Rāghavapāṇḍaviya* and narrates the stories of Nala and Harischandra simultaneously. It reveals the great scholarship of the poet. Many descriptions in the work are quite attractive, even though they contain a

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In the case of the famous poet Tenali Ramakrishna too there is some doubt whether he lived in the court of Krishnadevaraya. Ramakrishna's humorous and occasional verses are very popular throughout the Telugu country. But he also wrote two major poems, *Ghaṭikācala Māhātmya* and *Pāṇḍuranga Māhātmya*. Some also attribute to him the *prabandha Udbhaṭārādhya Caritra*, which is about Saivism. *Pāṇḍuranga Māhātmya* and *Ghaṭikācala Māhātmya* are *kṣētramāhātmyas* that describe the greatness of the Pundarīka kṣētra on the banks of the rivers Bhaimi and Ghatikachala respectively. The themes of both are taken from *Skandapurāṇa*. The story in *Pāṇḍuranga Māhātmya* is narrated as an answer to the question: What is the place where the *kṣētra*, *tīrtha* and the deity are equally great and important? The poem contains many stories that indicate the greatness of the Pāṇḍuranga kṣētra. The stories of Pundarika, a great devotee, Nigamasharma, a fallen Brahmin youth, and Susila, a great *pativṛta*, testify to Ramakrishna's narrative skill. In the story of Nigamasharma, his sister, who comes to correct her brother, affectionately asks:

> Dear brother, you have not come to see me for a long time. Is it due to your fear that the study of the Vedas begun by you will be obstructed? My lotus-like eyes are pining to see you and your brother-in-law has been eager to see you as the ocean is eager to see the rise of the moon. (tr.)

The diction in this work is full of Sanskrit compounds and is intelligible only to scholars. It is only here and there that Ramakrishna exhibits his ability to present a style full of mellifluous Telugu words, idioms and proverbs. Ramakrishna is well-known for his exalted ideas and his ability to delineate *rasas* and characters.

The Other Poets. There are other great poets of this age, but they do not belong to the Aṣṭadiggaja group. Poets, for instance, of the Tallapaka family were great devotees of Lord Venkateswara. They wrote many works of poetry as well as *saṅkīrtanas*. Annamacharya (Annamācārya, 15th century), who is considered a *Padakavitāpitāmaha*, wrote many lyrics full of devotion and *śṛṅgāra* about Lord Venkateswara. His son Peda Tirumalacharya, a contemporary of Krishnadevaraya, composed many *kīrtanas*, a *daṇḍaka*, two *śatakas* and an *udāharaṇa* besides *Venkatēśvara vacanamulu*. His stepmother Timmakka wrote *Subhadrā Kalyāṇa* in the *dvipada* metre. The marriage of Arjuna and Subhadra is the theme of this small but sweet work. The sons of Peda Tirumalacharya were also great poets. Chinnanna, the author of *Aṣṭamahiṣī Kalyāṇa*, *Parama Yogi Vilāsa*, *Uṣāpariṇaya* and the biography of Annamacharya, all in the *dvipada* metre, and China Tirumalacharya, who translated the *Saṅkīrtanalakṣaṇa* of his grandfather, merit special mention.

Sankusala Nrisimha Kavi (Sankusāla Nṛsiṃha Kavi, first half of the 16th century) wrote *Kavikarṇa rasāyana*, a *prabandha* of six cantos dedicated to God Srīrangēśwara. The marriage of Emperor Mandhāta and Vimalāngi is the theme of this work. His descriptions are meaningful and dignified. He is as capable of depicting *śṛṅgāra* as *vairāgya* and expresses the following idea in one of his verses:

> Even a hermit becomes a gallant if he hears the description of *śṛṅgāra* in my work and a gallant cannot but become a hermit if he hears the description of *vairāgya* in my work. (tr.)

His style is eloquent but full of Sanskrit compounds. He seems to have avoided royal patronage.

The foremost among Telugu poetesses of this period is Atukuru Molla, about whom few personal details are available. A humble devotee of Sri Rama, she wrote a Ramayana and dedicated it to Rama himself. Though she says at the beginning of this work that she possesses no scholarship, the work does not corroborate the statement as it contains verses full of *ślēsa* and figures of speech. She tells the story very briefly and observes propriety throughout. She depicts *karuṇa rasa* sensitively while describing Rama's grief after the abduction of Sita and when Sita narrates her pathetic predicament to Hanuman in *Sundarakāṇḍa*. She says that Telugu poetry should be devoid of unintelligible, complicated Sanskrit compounds and, instead, should be full of *dhvani* and as easily understandable to all as a mouth that knows sweetness as soon as a drop of honey falls in it.

Other important poets of the age are Velagapudi Vengayāmatya (translator of *Srīkṛṣṇa Karṇāmṛta*), Kandukūri Rudrakavi (*Niramkuśōpākhyāna*, *Janārdanāṣṭaka*), Charigonda Dharmanna (*Chitrabhārata*), Haribhattu (*Varāhapurāṇa*, *Matsya Purāṇa*), Addanki Gangādhara Kavi (*Tapatī Sanuvaranōpākhyāna*), Sarangu Tammaya (*Vaijayantī Vilāsa*) and Mallareddi (*Ṣaṭcakravarti Caritra*, *Sivadharmōttara*, *Padmapurāṇa*). Telaganna's *Yayāti Caritra* is the first *Accha Tenugu* (Pure Telugu without *Tatsama* words) poem and owes its theme to the Bharata and the *Bhāgavata*. Telaganna wrote this *prabandha* without using any Sanskrit words. No such work was written prior to this and he thus paved the way for a new literary form.

The Southern Period

This age derives its name from Telugu literature that flourished in the south, especially in Madurai, Thanjavur, Pudukkottai, Chenji and Mysore. Krishnadevaraya conquered a large portion of the south and appointed Telugus to rule over certain areas. After the fall of the Vijayanagar Empire, many of these Nayaks declared their independence and established their own kingdoms. Among such Nayakdoms, those of Madurai and Thanjavur were the most important. The Nayaks of these two kingdoms were lovers of

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literature and the arts and patronized poets and artistes, several of whom came from the Telugu country and settled here. In this way, Telugu literature flourished in the south.

Thanjavur Poets. Raghunadha Nayaka (1614–38), the greatest of the Nayaks, can be compared to Krishnadevaraya in many respects. He was himself a poet and composed many poetical works, of which *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Vālmīkīcaritra* and two *dvipada kāvyas* are the most important. Only about four cantos of the *Bāla Kāṇḍa* of his Ramayana are now available. In the second canto, Raghunadha engagingly narrates the story of Ṛśyaśṛṅga. *Vālmīkīcaritra* describes the early life of Valmiki, the 'Ādikavi', in Sanskrit. The third canto describes how Rambha and Urvasi were insulted. The way in which Valmiki became a great poet is skilfully narrated by the poet in this work. Yagnanārāyaṇa Dīkṣit states in his *Sāhitya Ratnākara* that Raghunadha had described *Pārijātāpaharaṇa* extemporaneously and has been honoured with *Kanakābhiṣēka* by his father. *Nalacaritra* and *Acyutābhyudaya* are Raghunadha's two *dvipada* poems. The first describes the story of Nala and Damayanti in eight cantos while the second is a biography of his father Acyutanāyaka.

Chemakura Venkatakavi (Cēmakūra Vēṅkaṭakavi, 1590–1650) is the greatest of the poets who adorned the court of Raghunadha. He is the author of two *prabandhas*, *Sārangadhara Caritra* and *Vijayavilāsamu*, both of which he dedicated to Raghunadha himself. *Sārangadhāra Caritra* narrates how Chitrangi, the wife of Rajaraja, fell in love with her stepson Sārangadhara, who however, rejected her and was unjustly punished for this. This, the first work of Venkatakavi, tends to create an aversion in the minds of readers because of its theme. Yet the innate greatness of the poet is quite recognizable in it. *Vijayavilāsamu* is one of the finest *prabandhas* in Telugu and describes in three cantos Arjuna, the Pandava prince, marrying Ulūchi, Chitrāngada and Subhadra. The source for this *prabandha* is the story in the Mahabharata which Venkatakavi enlarges with beautiful descriptions, dignified ideas and clever figures of speech. He is adept in the use of *ślēṣa*, *yamaka* and meaningful words as well as in describing love.

Other poets patronized by Raghunadha were Krishnādhwari (Kṛṣṇādhvari, 1590–1660), the author of *Naiṣadha Pārijātā*, a *dvyarthi kāvya* describing the stories of Nala and Pārijātāpaharaṇa simultaneously and *Raghunādha Bhūpālīya*, a rhetorical work describing the qualities of Raghunadha in *lakṣya* verses, and Kālaya Kavi, who wrote *Rājagōpāla Vilāsa*, a *prabandha*, in five cantos.

Vijayaraghava (1620–95), who wrote about 50 works, of which *Pādukāsahasra* and *Raghunāthābhyudaya* are *dvipada* poems and the others are Yakshaganas. Among his short poems the best known is *Gōpikā Bhramaragītamulu*.

Rangajamma, who could compose poetry in eight languages, also adorned the court of Vijayarāghava. She is said to have written *Saṅgraha Bhāgavata*, *Saṅgraha Bhārata*, *Saṅgraha Rāmāyaṇa*, *Uṣāpariṇaya* and *Mannārudasa Vilāsa*.

Savaramu China Narayana (1600–60), belonging to the royal family of Chenji, is the author of *Kuvalayāvsacaritra*, a *prabandha* which takes the story from *Mārkaṇḍēyapurāṇa*. The marriage of king Ṛtudhvaja to Madālasa, a Gandharva girl, is the main theme of this work. There are many sub-stories in this poem which, critics feel, is the equal of *Kalāpūrṇōdaya* in its narrative technique, natural descriptions, propriety and beauty of conversation. Narayana's style is sweet and flowing. He dedicated this work to Narayana Raja, who had adopted him.

Poets of Madurai. Linganamakhi Kameswara Kavi (17th century) adorned the court of Muddalagiri and wrote the *prabandha Satyabhāma Sāntvana*. He tried unsuccessfully to imitate Timmana's *Pārijātāpaharaṇa*. In certain situations he transgresses the limits of propriety. Ganapavarapu Venkata Kavi (17th century) was a scholar acquainted with many *śāstrās* and wrote several poetical works including the unique *prabandha*, *Rājā Veṅkaṭēśvara Vijaya Vilāsa* and *Sarvalakṣaṇa Sirōmaṇi*, an encyclopaedia of all *lakṣaṇās*, which contains 10 *ullāsas* (chapters), each of which is a *lakṣaṇa grandha* in itself.

Other well-known poets were Samukham Venkatakrishṇappa Nayaka (*Ahalyā Saṅkrāndana*; *Rādhikā Sāntvana*), Muddupalani (*Rādhika Sāntvana*), Sesham Venkatapati (*Tārāśaśānka Vijaya*), Velagapudi Krishnayya (*Bhānumadvijaya*) and Kundurti Venkatachalapati (*Mitravindā Pariṇaya*).

Pudukkottai. Vijaya Raghunadha (1730–69), one of the kings of Pudukkottai, patronized poets of the Nudurupati family. His son Raya Raghunadha (1769–80) wrote *Pārvatipariṇaya* one of the best *prabandhas* of the age. This work contains many new ideas, mellifluous words and beautiful descriptions. Also to be found in this poem are translations of some of the *ślokas* of Kalidasa's *Kumārasambhava*.

Mysore. Some poets who flourished in the court of Mysore produced important Telugu poems and prose works. Of them, *Śuka Saptati* written by Palavekari Kadiripati (latter half of 17th century), is the best-known work. It derives its name from the fact that it contains 70 (*saptati*) stories narrated by a parrot. Some of these stories are full of *śṛṅgāra* and are at time obscene. Kadiripati, an expert in telling a story, vividly describes contemporary life in the work, which has been translated into Parsi and from Parsi into Urdu.

The Andhra Region. During the Southern Period, several poets and writers produced notable poems in the Andhra and Telangana regions also. In the Andhra region, Dāmera-

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Vengalanayaka (middle of the 17th century) wrote *Kṛṣṇacaritra* and *Bahulāśvacariṭṛa*. The poet, a devotee of Rama, dedicated the second poem to Rama. In it he describes Krishna going to the house of Bahulāśva for a feast. The pangs of separation experienced by the Gopikas during Krishna's absence are vividly described in this work. The poet, a great scholar in both Sanskrit and Telugu, felt that none but Kalidasa and his ilk were his equals in the art of poetry.

Special mention should be made of historical poems written in the 17th century. One of them is Andugula Venkayya's *Narapatīvijaya* (alias *Rāmarājīya*), which describes the valour of the kings of the Āravīti dynasty. Another is *Kṛṣṇārayavijaya* by Venkataraya, who is otherwise called Kumāra Dhūrjaṭi and is a grandson of Dhurjati. This poem describes the foundation of the Vijayanagara empire and the victories of Sri Krishnadevaraya.

Kuchimanchi Timmakavi (Kūcimañci Timmakavi, 1700–56) wrote many works and was given the title of 'Kavisārvabhouma'. Like Potana, he disliked worldly pleasure and dedicated all his works to god Kukkuṭeswara of Pithapuram. Of his works, *prabandhas* such as *Rukmiṇī Pariṇayam*, *Rājaśēkharavilāsamu*, *Rasikajanamanōbhirāmamu* and *Śivalīlāvilāsamu*; *Accha Tenugu* poems such as *Nīlāsundarīpariṇayamu* and *Rāmāyaṇamu*; *Kukkuṭēśvaraśataka* and *Sarvalakṣaṇasārasaṅgraha*, work on prosody and grammar respectively are noteworthy. His brother Jaggakavi wrote *Subhadrāpariṇaya*, a *prabandha*, *Candrarēkhāvilāpamu*, a satire, and *Sōmadēvarajīyamu* which is based on Kase Sarvappa's *Siddhēśvaracariṭra*. Enugu Lakshmanakavi, Elakuchi Balasaraswati and Pushpagiri Timmana all translated Bhartṛhari's Sanskrit work *Subhāṣitatriśati* into Telugu. Of these translations Lakshmanakavi's is the most popular.

Adidam Surakavi, who belonged to the estate of Vijayanagaram wrote *Kavijanarañjanamu*, *Rāmalingēśvara Śatakamu*, *Kavisamasyavichhēdamu* (a work on rhetoric and grammar), *Āndhra Candrālōkamu* and *Āndhranāmasēṣamu* (a dictionary that is a supplement to the *Āndhranāmasaṅgraha* of Paidipati Lakshmanakavi). *Kavijanarañjanamu* is the best of Surakavi's works. It deals with the marriage of Chandramati in three cantos and is modelled on *Vāsucariṭra*. His *Rāmaliṅgēśvara Śatakamu* exposes all the evil deeds of the zamindars of those days. Surakavi dedicated all his works to God Ramalingeswara of Ramachandrapuram. His style is chaste and pleasant. There is a saying in Telugu that Surakavi's satire is like the stroke of a goldsmith's hammer.

Kanuparti Abbayamatya is the author of two *prabandhas*, *Aniruddhacariṭra* and *Kavirājamanōrañjana*. The latter tells the story of the Pururavas and is generally called a 'baby Vāsucariṭra', as it resembles the *Vāsucaritra* in many respects. Kankanti Paparaju (1750–1800), wrote *Uttararāmacarita* in *campu* form as a *prabandha*. The source for this and Tikkana's *Nirvacanōttara Rāmāyaṇa* is Valmiki's *Uttarakāṇḍa*, but while Tikkana appears to have abbreviated the source-work to some extent, Paparaju enlarged it with descriptions in the *prabandha* style. Dittakavi Narayanakavi (1790–1850) wrote a historical poem, *Raṇgarāya Cariṭra* which describes the battle of Bobbili that took place in 1757 between the armies of Rao Rangarao, the king of Bobbili, and the armies of Vijayarāmarāju of Vijayanagaram who were aided by French troops under General de Bussy. Though the Bobbili armies suffered defeat, their valour was unparalleled and Narayanakavi describes it with great enthusiasm. Urdu words current in those days are used in this work in several contexts. Mangalagiri Ānandakavi and Pingali Ellanarya, both belonging to the latter half of the 18th century, wrote *Vēdāntasāra* and *Tōbhyacariṭra* (alias *Sarvēśvara Māhātmyam*) respectively. Both these works are related to Christianity and contain descriptions in the *prabandha* style.

Vemana, the great yogi and poet, who lived in the first half of the 18th century, wrote thousands of verses in the *Ātaveladi* metre with which every literate Andhra is acquainted. Pindiprolu Lakshmanakavi wrote a *dvyarthi kāvya* called *Rāvaṇadammiyam* or *Laṅkāvijaya*. It is said that when Rao Dharmaraya misappropriated a portion of the poet's land, Lakshmanakavi, an expert in satire wrote this poem in anger, comparing Dharmaraya to Ravana and the misappropriation of the land to the abduction of Sita.

Of the poets who lived in the latter half of the 18th century and the early part of the 19th Sistu Krishnamurty Sastry (*Sarvakamadāpariṇayamu*), Mandapaka Parvatiswara Sastry (*Kāñcīpura Māhātmyamu*) and Gopinatham Venkatakavi (*Gōpinātha Rāmāyaṇa*) among others should be mentioned.

Of the poetesses who flourished during this period, Tarigonda Venkamamba (Tarigonda Venkamāmba, 1798–1850) is outstanding. She wrote *Veṅkaṭāchala Māhātmya*, *Jñānavāsiṣṭa* and *Rājayōgasāramu*. The first is the *prabandha* describing the greatness of the Venkatagiri Kṣētra. The story of this poem is taken from *Varāha* and *Bhaviṣyōttarapurāṇas*. The story of Madhava, a Brahmin youth, and the marriage of Padmavati and Srinivasa are also described engagingly in it. *Jñānavāsiṣṭa* and *Rājayōgasāramu* are written in *dvipada* metre and deal with philosophy and Rājayōga respectively. Venkamamba's style is simple even while describing spiritual and philosophical concepts and her language is close to popular usage. She displays great modesty and propriety in spite of her rich experience and philosophical knowledge.

In Telangana. Among the great poets in Telangana during this period was Surabhi Madhavarayalu, the chief of the Jataprolu estate, who wrote a *prabandha* called *Candrikāpariṇaya* in which he describes the love story of Chandrika and Suchandra. He shows a great fondness for figures of

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speech and indulges in elaborate descriptions in the manner of Bhattumurti, as a result of which his work has been described as a 'Baby Vasucharitra'.

Parasuramapantula Lingamurti of Warangal wrote a *prabandha* called *Ratimanmadhavilāsa* in his youth, but in course of time he changed temperamentally and produced an excellent philosophical work, *Sītārāmāñjaṅēyāsaṁvāda* (1923) which establishes the identity of 'Jīva' as Brahman. Lingamurti is an expert in narrating with ease and felicity even spiritual facts and in introducing proper similes to make obscure philosophy intelligible to even ordinary people. His work has a unique place among the philosophical compositions in Telugu. Lingamurti's son Ramamurti also wrote a philosophical poem called *Śukacaritra*.

Decadence of Traditional Poetry. The period from 1750 to 1850 is generally considered the age of decadence in Telugu literature. This is because many poets of this period became fond of figures of speech embellishments such as *ślēṣa*, *yamaka* and *anuprāsa* and neglected *rasa*, the soul of poetry. Poetry, as a consequence, lost much of its natural beauty and became artificial. The *Saraswatī Nārada Samvāda* (dialogue) of Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu gives a clear, idea of the artificiality of Telugu poetry of those days. As mere imitation became the fashion of the day, young scholars who knew English became aware of this defect and tried to search for new types and forms.

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Urdu

WAHAB ASHRAFI

Traditional Urdu poetry comprises a few literary genres that have a definite history of growth and development. The genres are the *masnavi*, *ghazal*, *qasida*, *mārsia*, *rekhti*, *nazm*, etc.

The *masnavi* (mathnavi), which can be on any subject, is a compact poem in which every couplet has a different rhyme arranged in a uniform metrical scheme which is usually devoted to mystical themes or romantic tales. The first *masnavi*, *Kadam Rao Padam Rao*, is believed to have been composed some time between 1421 and 1435 by Fakhredin Nezāmī, who lived during the reign of Ahmad Shah Behmani. This *masnavi* tells the tale of a fictitious king, Kadam Rao, who is human, and his most trusted minister, Padam Rao, who is a snake. The kingdom had enjoyed years of peace until a strange magician visited it and persuaded the king to learn a few metaphysical lessons, including one that taught how a soul could be transferred from one body to another. Under the guise of a test, the magician makes the king's soul enter the body of a dead parrot and himself takes possession of the king's body. The magician now takes over the country, but when the parrot-king relates the whole story of treachery to his minister-snake, the snake bites the magician and kills him making room for the lawful king to return to his own body. This *masnavi* paved the way for several anecdotal *masnavis* in the Deccan region, where the form thrived for hundreds of years, before it spread to North India. Some of the Deccani *masnavis*, therefore, need to be specially considered.

The Deccani Masnavi

Assad-ul-lāh Wajhī (?–1659), better known as Wajhi, is the author of *Qutb Muṣtari* (1609), a romantic *masnavi*. It is a story based on the love of Mohammad Qulī Qutb Shāh, the fourth king of the Qutb Shahi dynasty, who reigned in Golkonda between 1580 and 1611, for a dancer, Bhagmati

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But historical facts mingled with elements of fiction makes it lose credibility. The story, as narrated by H. K. Sherwani in 1890, is as follows:

It so happened that Sultan Ibrahim (whom Wajhi calls Raja Adhiraj) had no issue for a long time. So when he did have an issue, whom he named Muhammad Quli or 'the servant of the Prophet', there were great rejoicings in the state. When the prince grew up, he proved so intelligent that it was not long before he became like a 'savant', a poet and a calligraphist of note. Being of an amorous nature, he soon began to indulge in drink, song and dance. One night he dreamt of a beautiful girl with whom he fell in love immediately, and the thought of the girl would not leave him even when he was awake. He left with his friend Utarad, the painter, in search of the girl. After going through innumerable hardships they reached the kingdom of Bengal where they at last found the girl of Muhammad Quli's dream. She was a princess in her own right and her name was Mushtari. Utarad managed to get himself introduced to those in charge of the palace and also to get a commission to paint the apartments of the princess. He was able to introduce the figure of Muhammad Quli in his composition, and when Mushtari saw it, she was so much taken up by it that she swooned with love for him. At last Muhammad Quli was able to persuade her to accompany him to Haidarabad where they were married with great pomp...and they lived happily ever after. (H.K. Sherwani, *Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah*, pp. 53–57).

The whole structure of the romance rests on Muhammad Quli, who is the key actor in the drama. In consonance with the dynastic title of the Sultan, namely Qutb, or the pole-star, Wajhi gives all the other 'dramatis personae' astronomical names. The boon companion of Qutb is Utarad or Mercury and the other characters are Mushtari or Jupiter, Mirrikh or Mars, Zuhra or Venus and Mahtab or the Moon. All these revolve round Qutb, in the same way as the stars in the firmament revolve round the pole-star.

Wajhi is a fine story-teller and he keeps in mind every detail of a situation he wants to depict. Here is how he describes a wine feast in *Qutb Muṣtari*:

One night the Emperor an assembly made;
The sons of ministers sat with him there,
And every youth was handsome, fair to see,
And winsome everyone with youthful charm;
In war was unafraid as great king Jam,
In bravery not Rustam's self more brave,
Courtiers and singers, elegant and wise,
Sat in one place together with the king.
Goblet and pitcher taking in their hand,
The courtiers one and all engaged in talk;
And when the singers rhythmically sang,
The earth was trembling with the jovial sound,
Upon them, as they sang in that wild waste,
A frenzy passed through overmuch desire;
And they that served the king in minstrelsy
Were adding melody to melody.
The singers entering into merriment
Would presently make even mourners gay.
With wine and pitcher, salted fruits and cup
Intoxicated all the guests become.
When half the night was come and midnight lowered
Bereft of sense were friends with sense before.
Courtiers remembered not low to converse
And singers their surrounding heeded not.

(tr. T. G. Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 23)

Wajhi, a major composer of *masnavis*, is praised by critics for the uniqueness and freshness of his imagery.

The *masnavi* tradition gains further ground with the romances of Gavvāsī, whose three *masnavis*, *Saiful Muluk O Badī ul Jamāl*, *Tutī Nāmā* and *Mainā Satwantī* show his powerful poetic sensibility. There are different manuscripts of *Saiful Muluk O Badī ul Jamāl*, which bear different dates, such as 1616, 1618 and 1624. Gavvasi's date of birth is also a matter of speculation. But he was sent to Golkonda, with Malick Khushnod, by King Abdullah Qutb Shah in 1636.

The story of *Saiful Muluk O Badī ul Jamāl* was derived from the Arabic *Alif Laila*. But Gavvasi has added many fresh elements to the original. He is a master story-teller and, with simplicity and brevity, depicts characters well.

Mainā Satwantī has been taken from Dawod's *Candain* (1387), a poem written in old Awadhi. *Candain*'s plot has also been attempted by Daulat Qazi in Bengali and in Persian by Hamīdī in the early 17th century. But Gavvasi has made his poem alive against the framework of the Deccan.

Tutī Nāmā (1639) was composed when the poet was quite old. Its plot is based on an ancient Sanskrit poem, *Sakasb Tatī*, in which a parrot tells 70 different stories, but Gavvasi's immediate source is a Persian prose rendering by Ziauddin Bakṣī Nakhṣabī of *Sakasb Tatī*, under the same title *Tutī Nāmā* (1329).

It is generally accepted that Gavvasi's poems paved the way for the future poets to weave cultural aspects into the fabric of poetry. He was also a great upholder of the values of life and society. He is, at times, mystical and his *Tutī Nāmā* is a seedwork in respect of mystic and sophist poetry, which later became the basis of all Urdu traditional poetry.

Another dimension was added to the *masnavi* by a poet of the Deccan, Mirzā Mohammad Mukim (1606–69). His *Fath Nāmā Bakheri* (1646), which has a historical base, deals with the aspects of the war between Sultan Mohammad Adil Shah and Raja Abder Bhadra. The poem begins

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with a description of the night and then of the day on which the battle is to be fought. The poet details all the steps the Sultan takes before he sets out for Binkapur to conquer Bikheri. Mukim names several warriors who participated in the battle and describes some historical events and other happenings. But the poem does not stand the test of history.

Other Masnavi Writers

Mukim's contemporary Mukimī (1606–68), of Bijapur, is a poet with a different view. His *Canderbadan-o-Mehyar*, is a *masnavi* that is purely lyrical and emotional. It narrates the story of two lovers who die for each other. The love element may be discerned in all stages of development of Urdu poetry. *Canderbaden-o-Mehyar*, however, is the first love-poem in the *masnavi* form. Chanderbadan is the beautiful and only daughter of a king. Mehyar, the handsome son of a trader, one day sees Chanderbadan and is so enchanted by her beauty that he feels he cannot live without her. At first the heroine does not respond to the approaches of the hero, but gradually she falls in love with him. Mehyar, however, is a Muslim and Chanderbadan a Hindu, so they cannot be united. Broken-hearted Mehyar dies, but the cot with his corpse does not proceed beyond the house of his beloved. Chanderbadan, deeply moved by the incident, becomes a Muslim, joins her beloved on the bier and dies. When the funeral procession reaches the burial ground, all those present there are astonished to see the dead body of Chanderbadan eternally united with Mehyar's. The tragic theme of this moving *masnavi* has inspired many poets who have exploited it, each in his own way. The concept of lovers dying has since become a permanent feature of Urdu poetry as well as fiction.

Another *masnavi* writer of importance is Mohammad Bin Ahmad Ajiz whose *Yusuf-Zulekhā* (1634) and *Lailā-Majnu* (1636) are well known. There is an eulogy of Sultan Mohammad Adil Shah in *Yusuf-Zulekhā*, which would seem to indicate that the poem was read in the durbar. *Yusuf-Zulekhā* depicts the story of the love of the queen of Egypt for her slave Yusuf—an episode from the holy Quran while *Lailā-Majnu* is the tale of Majnu's infatuation for his lady-love Laila for whom he relinquishes all worldly comforts. *Yusuf-Zulekhā* is not a long poem though it appears to have been based on the long Persian *masnavi* of the same title, written by the poet's father Saikh Ahmad Gujrati, who based his poem on Nezamī's *Yusuf-Zulekhā*. Technically speaking, Ajiz's poem is full of flaws. The brevity of the poem has also prevented him from covering various details that are necessary. His other *masnavi*, *Lailā-Majnu*, is derived from Hātifī's Persian poem of the same name. Here again, Ajiz has shortened the poem and omitted picturesque details, but by additions he makes it an original composition. Both poems fail on artistic grounds, but Ajiz has succeeded in changing the setting from a Persian to an Indian one. Both Laila and Zulekha appear to be Indian in their behaviour, mood and thought. The Indianization of foreign characters is a special feature of Urdu poetry and has developed into a well-established tradition.

The Persian Tradition

The Persian tradition seems to have taken root in Urdu poetry some time during the 17th century. A number of Urdu *masnavi* writers have taken special care to model their work on the pattern of the Persian *masnavi*, both in form and content. Malik Khusrau wrote a *masnavi*, *Jannat Singār* (Decoration for Paradise, 1640), based on Amir Khusrau's *Haṣṭ Bahist* (Eight Paradises). The poem is about seven damsels who have been chosen from seven different countries for the enjoyment of the hero, Shah Behram. The hero visits each damsel in turn in the beautiful castle built for her, and on each of the seven nights listens to a story narrated by his companion of the night. All these stories are romantic adventures. When the seven nights are over, the hero goes out hunting and is never seen again.

Another *masnavi* writer who continued the Persian tradition is Mīr Amīn Nāmī whose date of birth and biographical details are not known. He, however, lived during the reign of Sultān Ādil Shah and composed an unfinished *masnavi* on the pattern of Mukimi's *Canderbaden-o-Mehyar*. He titled his poem *Behrām o Husn Bāno*. It appears from the text that the poem was completed by another poet of his day, Daulat Shah. The poem is replete with Persian allusions and references, and the language is very polished. The poem bears testimony to the fact that the Deccani elements were being steadily replaced by the Persian.

The development of the *masnavi* in the Deccan gained another dimension with an extraordinarily voluminous composition, *Khawar Nāmā*, an epic by Kamal Khan Rustami Bijapuri who lived during the reign of Mohammad Adil Shah. All that is known about him is that he was the son of Ismail Khattāt Khān. *Khawar Nāmā*, however, is not an original poem, it is a literal translation of a Persian *masnavi* composed by Ibn Hassan in the early 14th century. The epic's basic theme is the valour of Hazrat Ali, the fourth Muslim Caliph. There are 2400 couplets in the poem which includes, among other things, romances about giants, fairies, magicians, man-eaters and kings. All of them are treated as insignificant beings, merely to prove the supernatural might of the hero, Hazrat Ali.

The new epic tradition founded by Rustami was unfortunately not followed by the poets of his age or later Urdu poets. As a result, the epic as an Urdu literary form, even in the style of the *masnavi*, did not last. An exception, however, has been *Alī Nāmā* by Mulla Nusratī. It is observed from his poem that he lived a long life, encompassing the reigns of Mohammad Adil Shah and Sikandar Adil Shah. Considered one of the major Deccani poets, his fame rests

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mainly on *Alī Nāmā* (1656), though he is also the author of *Gulṣan-e-Iṣk* (1657), a love-poem. *Alī Nāmā* has a historical base; modern historians consider it an authentic document concerning the major events that occurred during the reign of Ali Adil Shah Sani (1656–66). In the opinion of Bailey:

> *Alī Nāmā*...is a long account of the glorious deeds of his royal master. It is superior to every other poem produced in Bijapur. It tells the history of Ali Adil Shah's reign for ten years (1656–66) and is the first biography in the language. Scattered through it are five odes, mostly on military subjects, which place the author's name high among Urdu ode writers. He writes powerfully, with more description and less panegyric than the poets of North India.
>
> (T.G. Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature*)

Other noteworthy *masnavis* are Amin Dakni's *Behrām o Husn Bāno* (1640), Sinati's *Kissa-e-Benazīr* (1645), Kudrati's *Kassaul Ambeyā* (1682), Hasmi's *Yusuf-Zulekhā* (1687), Junaidi's *Mahe Paikar* (1652), Gholam Ali's *Padmāvat* (1679), Sevak's *Jaṅg Nāmā* (1681), Khakiz's *Kissae Zakum Ṣāh* (1681), Faiez's *Kissae Rizwān Ṣāh* (1682), Behri's *Man Lagan* (1699), Huner's *Nīh Darpaṇ* (1699), Wajdi's, *Tuhfae Aśikan* and Seraj's *Bostane Kheyāl* (1747). It is unfortunate that very little is known about the authors of these poems.

The Ghazal

When the tradition of the *masnavi* spread to the north, the Deccani language yielded place to the 'Khaṛi Boli' or the 'Zabane Dehlavi' or the 'Rekhta' or Urdu. The last major poet in the Deccani language, Walī (1667–1741) leaned towards Khari Boli, as he had regular contact with Delhi. He also occasionally wrote in 'Rekhta'. The *masnavi*, however, was replaced by a new genre called the *ghazal*, which soon became more popular. Shabuddin Rahmatullah defines the *ghazal* as follows:

> The commonest and most popular form of Urdu poetry is known as *ghazal*, which means 'talking to the tender sex'. It is usually a short lyric but may sometimes represent a poem. Strictly speaking, it should have the same rhyme throughout. It normally has a first line, called 'matla' which means 'the rise', in which both the hemistichs rhyme. The other lines, namely the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. need have the same rhyme in their second hemistichs only. The last couplet of a *ghazal* is called 'maqta', which means 'the end', in which the poet generally indicates his 'takhallus' or pseudonym, which he adopts according to his own fancy. It may be a part of his name or may be quite a different word, like 'atash' meaning fire, or 'dard' meaning pain. In a *ghazal*, except when it is a poem, every line with its two hemistichs conveys a complete idea or picture which is quite different from and unconnected with what is conveyed in its other lines.
>
> (S. Rahmatullah, *Art in Urdu Poetry*, p. 4)

It is very difficult indeed to explain the *ghazal* form. In short, it is the expression of the essence of subjective experiences put succinctly in a couple of lines with the help of conventional imagery and symbols, thus covering a wide range of situations in the garb of generalized symbols. Themes may be love, wine and mysticism. Symbols may be gardens, wine, chains or a rose bud, but these symbols can be extended to diverse human situations. This manifold symbolism was necessitated by the persecution of Sufis, at the hands of fanatics and the royalty in Persia, who took shelter in symbols for expressing thoughts that would be censored. In Urdu, the tradition flourished in an age of tension, when the poet felt himself unable to elaborate his experiences due to political uncertainty. Though *ghazals* were written by several poets ranging from Amir Khusrau (1255–1325) to Nusratī Hāshmī (? –1697); Mohammad Kulī Qutb Shah (1518–43), Wajdi, Gavvasi Mahmood (? –1567) and Hassan Sahqui (1541–1633) had also composed *ghazals*, but their *ghazals* were, generally speaking, by-products of their *masnavis*. Wali, however, gave a new dimension to the *ghazal*. He was a mystic poet who used the most beautiful allegories, metaphors and allusions. He was a passionate lover of beauty. His elegant style has served as a model for his successors. According to Khawja Ahmad Farooki:

> The appearance of Wali on the literary scene of Delhi was a historical necessity. The poets of Delhi wanted to write in the language of the home and the market place but they had no new model. In Wali they found their model. Hence there was universal enthusiasm for his spontaneous poems and he rightly deserves the title of 'Babae-rekhta' or 'Father of Urdu Poetry'.
>
> (Nagendra [ed.], *Indian Literature*)

Wali has also composed a few *qasidas*, a distinguished literary genre, very akin to the ode, generally panegyric in nature but occasionally satiric, and usually much longer than a *ghazal*. But Wali's *qasidas* are generally very short and eulogize his spiritual master.

Serāj (1715–63) is the most outstanding *ghazal* writer among the immediate successors of Wali. His uniqueness lies in his sweet and sensuous expression of emotions. Wrapped in the warmth of love, his poetry kindles the heart of his reader. He seems to live in a world of feeling; the normal tenor of life has no attraction for him. Seraj's love poetry is at once warm and exotic. His love is sensual and, as such, his eroticism is spontaneous. His *Divan*

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(collection of poems), however, contains 10,000 lines which include both *ghazals* and romances. Besides the *Kulliyat* he wrote a romance, *Bostān-e-Khayāl*.

The lyrical aspect of Urdu verse gained immense strength from the poetry of Seraj. His successors then took it to a point of perfection and added new features to it. Striking new elements in Urdu poetry are *Iham* (or, double meaning) and Sufism, now considered traditional characteristics of the Urdu *ghazal*. According to Ram Babu Saksena, 'Persian poetry had, in its last phase, developed an inordinate tendency towards Sufism and Urdu poetry humbly copied it. The Sufism of Persian poetry and the trend of the age coupled with the dervish character of early poets combined to give Urdu poetry a distinct Sufistic tendency' (Saksena R.B., *A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 16).

Important poets of this Sufistic school of poetry are Shah Mubārak Ābru (1684–1733), Sirājuddin Alī Khan Ārzu (1689–1756), Sheikh Sahiruddin Shah Hātim (1699–1791), Miān Sarfuddīn Mazmūn (?–1735), Mirzā Jan-i-Jānār Mazhar (1698–1781), Mohammad Shakīr Naji (during the reign of Mohammad Shah), Mīr Abdul Hai Tabān (Luft says that in 1786 he was an old man), Yakrang (during Mazhar's time) and Aṣraf Alī Khān Foghān (?–1772).

The Delhi School. Traditional Urdu poetry made considerable progress in the 18th century under the influence of what is called the Delhi School of Urdu Poetry. The great poets of this school further standardized the diction by introducing new imagery and adopted a few new motifs and accepted some new forms of Urdu poetry such as *wasokht* (poem threatening the beloved that the lover shall take to another beautiful damsel, describing her charms), *hajv* (satire), and perfected the old forms, especially the *ghazal*. Due, however, to the unsettled political conditions that prevailed during this period, several very prominent poets, including Mirza Mohammad Rafī Saudā (1713–80), Mīr Taqui Mir (1793–1810), Mīr Hasan (1736–86) and Mīr Soz (1720–98) left Delhi and sought refuge in the court of the Nawabs of Avadh.

Khawjā Mīr Dard (1720–84), a celebrated Sufi poet, preferred to remain in Delhi. He ranks highest among the Urdu mystical poets. Saksena says Dard's *ghazals* are marked by apt idiom, lofty thought, chastened emotions and refined diction. Dard shows great skill in developing spiritual themes. He is unrivalled in the use of short metres and his verses in them are the quintessence of the sublime and the sweet.

Sauda's was a multifaceted personality. While his panegyrics (*qasida*) in praise of nobles and spiritual leaders remain unsurpassed as a powerful expression of human appreciation, his satires lay bare the unevenness of the age, which was a saga of contradictions. His tender *ghazals* present his personality, a personality full of warmth and verve, while his *marthiyas* (elegy) bear testimony to his power of expression and his ability to depict anecdotes and paint situations as only a master artist can. An amusing episode in which Sauda describes himself as having taken part with more bravery than Horace, is his participation in a battle against the raiders. The adventure ends in a complete fiasco as the starving horse refused to budge. Another panegyric gives us a vivid picture of the poverty of the age and the ruin of the Amirs and the nobles of the great Mughal. A lampoon against one Kotwal of Delhi gives a comical description of the hardship endured by all in an age of uncertainty and corruption.

Mir Taqui Mir may well be regarded as the greatest composer of Urdu *ghazals*. His subjectivity, delicacy and exquisite sensitivity are the very essence of his charming poetry. Mir's *ghazals* are simple, eloquent and full of tender pathos. His verses have a haunting appeal which makes them real works of art. He is a master of the short metre, a medium which is difficult to use in *ghazal* writing. He wrote from his heart finding a permanent abode in the heart of the reader who could appreciate his diction. Mir and Sauda have been compared by Bailey thus:

> These two great writers were contemporaries and lived for long in the same town, Delhi; but they were a complete contrast to each other in both character and style. Mir was sad, tender, gloomy and poor; Sauda, living in comfortable circumstances, was jovial and boisterous, taking a cheerful view of life.... Mir excelled in poems of love, lyrics and romances, while Sauda's best efforts were in his odes or panegyrics and in his bitter satires.
>
> (T. G. Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 45)

Mir is known for the chastity, lucidity and simplicity, as well as the vigour and force, with which he writes his *ghazals*. His influence on later Urdu poetry has been great; even modern poets have tried to imitate his style.

Mir Hassan's *ghazals* have not stood the test of time, but as a *masnavi* writer his place is secure. His romance *Sahr-ul-Bayān* (1784) is considered one of the finest *masnavis* ever written in Urdu. The quality of a *masnavi* is often judged by this immortal poetic romance. Hassan knows how to tell a tale and, consequently, is one of the best craftsmen of the *masnavi*.

Mir Hassan uses in his *masnavi* a remarkably delicate style. His language is elegant, flowery and imaginative and he depicts scenes and sentiments vividly and beautifully. Saksena writes thus about his *masnavi*:

> The poem is a romance on the loves of prince Benazir and Badr-i-Munir, in which are introduced many interesting ethnographical details of female dress, marriage ceremonies and other customs. It is written in a simple style and abounds in proverbs and idiomatic phrases which have passed into the common speech of people.

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It is remarkable for its delicacy of diction, elegance of style, purity of idiom and erotic theme. The story is a conventional type. A prince brought up in the lap of luxury and reared in the strictest seclusion of the zenana is spirited away by a fairy who is enamoured of his matchless beauty. The prince after a little resistance resigns himself to his lot and is authorized to roam about on an enchanted horse made of wood, a present from his lady-love. In the course of his aerial promenades he descends into a beautiful garden and falls in love with a princess of dazzling beauty. The fairy discovering her false lover's secret amour seeks vengeance. After many adventures the prince is united with his lady-love and restored to his bereaved parents....

(R.B. Saksena, *A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 69)

Mushafi (1750–1824) was a prolific writer who left behind at least eight volumes of poetry consisting of *ghazals*, romances and odes, but at best he can be credited with the standardization of the *ghazal* by giving it simplicity of style and mellowness of expression. Insha (1756–1818), on the other hand, is known for his wit. His scholarship is noteworthy, but it does not help him to achieve the flow of Mir. He appears to be content with artificiality. However, he has tried to give the *ghazal* a radiance and a personality all its own. Betab rightly says that poetry gave a death blow to the scholarship and accomplishments of Insha while the companionship of Nawab Sādat Alī Khān proved the ruin of his poetry. Another well-known poet of this period is Qalandar Baksh Jurat (1749–1810) whose *ghazals* are erotic. But his eroticism is superficial and conventional. He sings of the tender moments of exhuberance and satiety, of the cravings and aspirations of a lover.

The tradition of the *ghazal*, with its melancholy and mystical moods, was enriched by Gholam Alī Rāsikh (1748–1822) of Azimabad (Patna). He was a Sufi poet and his *ghazals* and *masnavis* are strikingly simple and pure.

The Rekhti and Other Genres. In Lucknow a new genre, *Rekhti*, soon developed as a form of expression of the sentiments of love by male poets on behalf of women. The phraseology used was of women, and the tenderness of female emotions as well as the nuances of purdah-Nashim ladies were preserved. Besides Insha, Sādat Yar Khān Rangīn (1756–1834) and Jān Sāhib (1818–97) are important composers of *Rekhti*. Modern critics condemn it as a despicable product of the past. It had a natural decline.

Traditional poetry gained another dimension from the verses of the celebrated poet Nazīr Akbarabādī (1740–1830), whose poems (of the genre *nazm*) are deeply rooted in the Indian soil. He extended the tradition set by the Deccani poet Mohammad Quli Qutb Shah but while Qutb's vision was limited, Nazir's included almost everything that existed round him. Nazir was a natural romantic. But his love of the profane became such an obsession with him that he became morbid. Nazir, like Qutb, depicts the festivals, both of the Hindus and the Muslims, thus trying his best to Indianize some aspects of Urdu poetry by purging it of its Persian features. He has the distinction of being the first People's Poet in Urdu.

Another literary genre that developed was the *mārsia* (marthia), which is an elegiac poem, specifically about the martyrs of the Karbala. The poems are read loudly during the annual Moharram gatherings commemorating the martyrdom. Some of the *mārsias* of Quli Qutb Shah are commendable, but later refinements are to be found in the work of Mir Zamīr (?–1855), Mir Khalīq (1704–1804), Mīr Anīs (1802–74) and Mirzā Dabīr (1808–75).

Among all *mārsia* writers, Anis and Dabir call for special attention. Anis displays a wonderful knowledge of weapons of different kinds, the various qualities of a charger, etc. He stands unrivalled as the greatest master of elegiac epic poetry in Urdu. His style is remarkable for its simplicity, purity, appropriateness and flow. His compositions are unique for their striking metaphors and similes. In scholarship and power of imagination, Dabir perhaps excelled Anis, but because of the laboured style of his compositions, his excessive exaggeration and obtruse descriptions, his poetry seldom achieved the general excellence of the writings of Anis. Sir Tej Bahādur Sapru comments:

> It is significant that in the beginning of the nineteenth century two great personalities came upon the scene—Anis and Dabir, but it is still more remarkable that simultaneously with the decline and decay of the Mughal empire great Urdu poets came into being one after the other.... The general criticism about the nineteenth-century Urdu poetry is that it was a poetry of a decadent age. I do not agree with this criticism. It is indeed an irony to call it a decadent age in poetry when there were Ghalib, Dhauq and Momin in Delhi and Anis, Dabir, Atish and Nasikh in Lucknow with their indisputable eminence. It was the most sublime epoch of Urdu literary progress.
>
> (S. G. Inam, *Anis and Shakespeare: A Comparison*, p. ii)

Anis with his unexcelled capacity to depict the battle ground and its activity is a master artist. His pictures are full of life, his characters drawn with great care and creative finesse. His anecdotes bring a touch of epic and drama to an age-old conventional theme and lend colour to a historical event.

The Lucknow School

Before discussing the last phase of traditional Urdu poetry, a few important poets of the Lucknow school of Urdu poetry should be considered. They include Shaikh Imām Bakṣ Nāsikh (?–1838), Khawajā Haider Alī Ātas (1778–1846) and their pupils. The migration of some eminent poets

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from Delhi contributed much to the development of Urdu poetry in Lucknow. The poets of Delhi were accorded a hearty welcome by the Nawabs of Avadh. But the poets of the Lucknow school often indulged in various academic exercises in poetry, particularly in ornamental rhetoric. Their metaphors and similes were laboured and eclipsed feeling and thought. It was word painting that was considered the supreme element of the poetic craft.

Nasikh and a host of his pupils reigned supreme, despite his high-flown metaphors and extravagances of thought. Indeed, he prized grammatical corrections above all resulting in lifeless poetry. Atash, a pupil of Mushafi, a rival of Nasikh upheld the simplicity and feeling of a *ghazal*, his diction being delightfully idiomatic, simple and fluent. His views are remarkable for their soundness and his treatment of the subject matter is skilful. Atash was particularly noted for his outspoken defiance of authority and optimism. His carefree style refuses to be fettered either by superficial ornamentation or by conventionalism. Of his several pupils, Pandit Daya Şankar Kaul Nasīm (1811–73) is the most outstanding. His fame rests on his immortal *masnavi*, *Gulzar-i-Nasīm* (1833), which is recognized as one of the best pieces of Urdu poetry. Other noteworthy poets of this period are Muhammad Khān Rind (1797–1857), Alī Ausat Rask (1799–1867), Muhammad Rizā Bark (?–1857), Hatim Alī Beg Mihr (1814–79), Wājid Alī Shah Akhtar (1827–87), Arşad Alī Khān (?–1850), and Mahdi Alī Khān Zakī (?–1866).

The Last Dazzle

As pointed out by Khawja Ahmad Farooqi, the Lucknow school received a rude shock in 1856 when Jane Alam Wajid Ali Shah, the last Avadh king, was deposed and transported to Calcutta. With the annexation of Avadh, the Lucknow poets tried to catch up with the tune of Delhi, as their own morbid culture evaporated. Meanwhile in Delhi, even as Mughal authority flickered there was one last burst of dazzling light before Mughal culture was finally dimmed. This burst of cultural brilliance saw the emergence of such distinguished poets as Dhauq, Ghalib and Momin (1800–51). The emperor Bahādur Shah Zafar (1775–1862) was himself a poet and his age saw the blossoming of Asghar Alī Khān Nasīm (1794–1864), Mīr Husain Taslīm (1803–51), Mustafā Khān Shefta (1806–69) and others. In this galaxy of Urdu poets Momin, Zauq, Zafar and Ghalib are considered the brightest. They achieved distinctions that only Mir Taqui Mir had attained before them.

While Momin acquired deftness of style, multidimensional use of metaphor and oblique expressions in depicting romantic situations, Dhauq concentrated on simple and colloquial diction. Momin's love is neither mystical nor metaphysical, yet the poetry inspired by it remains sublime and highly enjoyable.

Zauq (Dhauq), once considered the rival of Ghalib, had Zafar, the last king of the Mughal kingdom, as his pupil. Zauq, a poet laureate, differed considerably from his contemporaries Momin and Ghalib in that he wrote simpler and more idiomatic language mainly dealing with moral precepts. His pupil Zafar, king of Delhi, composed with great ease, and some of his *ghazals* are immensely popular.

Ghalib, however, is the most outstanding poet in the Urdu language. Both as a subjective and objective poet he is supreme. His *Diwan* is the shortest of all, yet in it he has said everything that a poet has to say. He never tried to tread the common path and is, therefore, always unusual. He appears to have been influenced by the celebrated Persian poet Bedil. Shahabuddin Rahmatullah rightly says:

> His...verses are superb in flow, meaning and construction, and have attained a rare excellence through careful blending of meaning, philosophy, art and rhythm. There is no doubt that Ghalib excelled Heinrich Heine for whereas Ghalib presented external aspects of love and beauty and unfolded the entire human destiny by soaring higher than the highest planets and heavens, Heine only sang some songs of love and beauty in melancholy tone. If Ghalib can be compared to any poet that the world has produced, it is Johann Wolfgang von Goethe alone.
>
> (S. Rahmatullah, *Art in Urdu Poetry*, p. 47)

Traditional Urdu poetry reaches its pinnacle with the verses of Ghalib. A sense of modernity thereafter crept in. The poets of the Rampur court, viz. Amir Mina (1878–1900), Dagh (1831–1905), and Jalal Ludeanvi (?–1905) played the old tunes for a while. They dedicated themselves to the colloquial and idiomatic use of the language and traditional themes. Dagh in particular excelled in writing in simple and common speech; but despite the large number of his pupils, his influence soon faded out. The age of traditional poetry was over. A new cult had already been ushered in with the advent of Muhammad Hussain Āzad (1832–1910) and Altāf Hussain Hālī (1837–1914).

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Section 4

MODERN POETRY

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Introduction

V. K. GOKAK

The Transition

The Indianness of Indian literature is a living and dynamic awareness, operating simultaneously at multiple points and levels—her history and geography, her past, present and future, her relation to the parts that make the whole and her own place in the whole of which she is a part, her culture and folklore, myths and legends, her arts, sciences and technologies, her glory and her shame and her role as one of the major portions of the human race.

Indian poetry probably expresses the quintessence of Indianness better than other forms of Indian literature because of the closest possible union of music, meaning and image which poetry celebrates in its words. Indian poetry gives us the very *mantras* of Indianness. One remembers a song like *Janagaṇamana adhināyaka jaya hē Bhārata Bhāgyavidhāta!*, where the 'best' Indian words are used in the 'best' Indian order. Poetry can convey the essence of a whole civilization, whether on an epic scale or in brief lyric glimpses as in Tagore's song.

As everyone knows, the modern Indian Renaissance brought a new life-style into Indian society and a new outburst of light and energy. Modernity made its early appearance with Fort William College in Calcutta (A.D. 1800) and with Old Delhi College (1825). The poets of the Era of Transition, like Hamid of Sind, Dalpatram of Gujarat, Keshavsut of Maharashtra and Muddana of Karnataka, wrote lyrics on themes like the *printing press*, *fire brigade*, *railways*, *matchsticks*, *cakes of soap*, *doves*, *glow-worms*, *whisky*, *cheroot*, the *rumbling belly*, *trumpet*, *new soldier*, etc. New forms were introduced, like the lyric, the sonnet, the ode, the heroic epistle (Michael Madhusudan in Bengali), elegy, dramatic monologue and so on, into our languages. Bharati wrote the first sonnet in Tamil as early as 1901. Bholanath, the Assamese poet, tried his hand at blank verse (of the run-on type), as Madhusudan Dutt had done earlier in Bengali and Radhanath after him, in *Mahāyātra*, in Oriya. The transition came into its own with Mahjur in Kashmiri during the thirties of this century. It is curious to note that, in Hindi (Khariboli), modern prose came first and verse later. Bharatendu, the pioneer, who wrote his prose and drama in Khariboli, wrote his poetry only in Braj Bhasha, which had a tradition of five centuries. Khariboli poetry had to wait for Sridhar Pathak and Maithili Saran Gupta. The transition in Sindhi is even more curious. The Perso-Arabic script was introduced in Sind after the British took over that area in 1853. Consequently, Persian poetic forms, which had influenced Sindhi poetry even earlier, dominated it and superseded old forms like the *doha* and *sortha*. Changes in Sindhi had to wait for the arrival of Kishinchand, a schoolteacher.

A distinguishing feature of the transition in Telugu and Urdu was that some of the poets participated in poetic symposia and made their poetry popular. Hāli participated in the symposia that were started in 1874 by Colonel Holroyd (DE, the then Punjab)

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where poems on themes announced in advance were recited. In Telugu *avadhānas* or extempore poems were composed in assemblies by poets like Tirupati Venkata Kavulu. They carried traditional poetry from the landlords, to whom it was more or less confined, to all the educated classes. The tradition of *avadhānas* lingers to this day. In fact the taste for modern poetry was created and satisfied in Kannada by poets like D. R. Bendre and K. V. Puttappa (Kuvempu) and in Marathi by Yeshwant and Girish. This would have happened, normally, in each modern Indian language.

Each of the languages has its own unique features distinguishing its period of transition, by virtue of the local setting and circumstances in which the Renaissance had to unfold itself. The unique features would refer to the years during which it happened, the earliest in Bengal (the 1850s) and the most delayed in Kashmir (the 1930s), or the seventh, eighth or ninth decade of the 19th century as in most of the other languages. It might be that the change was first expressed in fiction in one language clearly and in another in poetry. The unique features could refer to the precedence given to one poetic or prosodic form or the other while borrowing from English or the preference shown to a particular English writer or poet more than to another.

But everywhere in India, during this period of transition, stimulated by the impact of western life, thought and feeling, a new type of writing unfolded itself by way of translation, adaptation, imitation and original composition. A revival of interest in the old classics in Sanskrit, Pali, etc. and in the regional languages, but from an entirely new angle, the angle of western humanism, unfolded itself. This was also a part of the Renaissance.

The Coming of Age of Renaissance Poetry

The modern Indian Renaissance was, in fact, a complex and many-sided movement in Indian life and letters. It would be wrong to regard it as a mere outburst of romanticism, in the manner of the English Romantics, glorifying Love, Nature and Man. It was no doubt that; but it was also a fervent call for a self-effacing love of the motherland and an uncompromising espousement of the cause of the underdog. It stood for idealism and realism, romanticism and naturalism, transcendentalism and materialism, mysticism and rationalism, nationalism and universalism, aestheticism and didacticism, and simplicity and virtuosity. The writers of this period reveal some or all of these tendencies in their writings. An intense subjectivity discovering a living soul in Nature and in the poignancy of personal love is countered or supplemented by an equally intense objectivity bent on discovering the beauty of common things. A love of the supernatural, the mystical and the legendary functions side by side with a passion for stark realism, even the sordid and the ugly, with its gaze fixed unerringly on social justice. The urge to revolt against conventions and to experiment with new verse-forms and the language of daily use is companion to the constant endeavour to search for the roots of the movement and for the materials of those 'cloths of gold' which the ancient masters had woven in their classics by way of diction and style. The many contradictions in the movement strongly bear out the fact that the movement itself contained 'multitudes'. It did so because the Renaissance was a total upsurge and a transformation of life from the base to the top in all departments of human activity. Even the later movements that followed the major era of flowering and fruit-gathering, like Progressive Writing and Experimental or Modernist poetry, fiction and drama, were just branches from the main trunk-line, an elongation of one strand or prolongation of one strain or the other of the original symphony.

What appellation shall we give to this period of efflorescence? The states which were fortunate enough to produce pioneers who acquired an all-India, or even a world-wide reputation then, give their names to the period—the age of Tagore, the age of Gandhi and the age of Iqbal. Some other states have followed the example with names obviously less illustrious but endowed with the same pioneering or representative significance:

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the age of Keshavsut in Maharashtra, of Bharati in Tamilnadu, of Bhai Vir Singh in the Punjab, and of Radhanath Ray in Orissa; of the romantic trio of Assam (L. Bezbarua, Chandrakumar, Hem Goswami), the romantic trio of Hindi (Jaishankar Prasad, Nirala and Sumitranandan Pant) and the great trio of Kerala (Asan, Vallathol and Ulloor).

Where these procedures have not been adopted, as in Andhra Pradesh, Kashmir and Karnataka, either the period is called in a straightforward manner as the period of 'romantic poetry' or *Navōdaya* poetry as in Karnataka. There was a quincunx (B. M. Srikantaiah, D. V. Gundappa, Masti, Panje, Govind Pai) that presided over the growth of modern Kannada poetry and Bendre and Kuvempu represented its fullest development.

A few characteristics of the period may be noted. Its best representatives were masters of several literary forms—poetry, fiction, drama, essay, criticism and so on. The 'masters' shone better sometimes in other literary forms, like Bezbarua or did not practise poetry like Gandhiji. The leading poets in Gujarati were Nanalal, Sundaram and Uma Shankar Joshi. Again, in a luminous firmament, where several stars of the first magnitude shine, it would be rash to go by one name and ignore the others. A common glow suffuses all the poets of the new dawn. In such a content, 'trio' and 'quincunx' are better than 'one' and better still is a phrase like *Navōdaya* or some such general description. Even Tagore had his brilliant predecessors in Michael Madhusudan Datta, Biharilal and others. A Hindi phrase like *Chāyāvād* does scant justice to its own and other Renaissance poets, for this world, as well as the next, was 'substance' to their integral vision, not shadow.

The 'Progressive' Phase of Renaissance Poetry

The view we take of literary activity is frequently coloured by the philosophy we profess. One may expect a Marxist literary critic to hold that the 'Progressive' phase is the real dawn of the Renaissance and that the transitional and romantic outbursts that preceded it were mere baby-talk.

To the simple historical vision of the present writer, whatever may be his personal philosophy, it seems, as already set forth, that the 'Progressive' movement is but a significant offshoot of the Renaissance. Almost all the leading *Navōdaya* poets expressed their indignation at social wrongs, as D. R. Bendre did in *The Bag of a Morsel of Food*:

We'll bury God under the ground
And visit his tomb on our nightly round;
Set fire to creeds of men that rave
To burn as incense on his grave.
Stung into madness by death-dearth,
We'll make a morsel of this earth!

Nevertheless, it was given, not to the *Navōdaya*, but its succeeding generation of poets to identify itself passionately and predominantly with the Progressive Movement. The first conference of progressive Indian writers was held in Lucknow in 1936. The movement was pioneered by Mohitlal, Nazrul Islam and others ('others' may be taken as an addition to any mention of names, in this essay) in Bengali; K. N. Agarwal, Suman and Mukthi Bodh in Hindi; Vay and Roshan in Kashmiri; Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, N. V. Krishna Warrier and K.P.G. Namboodiri in Malayalam; Karandikar and Bapat in Marathi; Anant Patnaik and Sachi Routroy in Oriya; Mohan Singh, Amrita Pritam and S. S. Dhir in Punjabi; and Jatoi and Ahuja in Sindhi. The Progressive Association was formed in 1948 in Tamilnadu. Thiru Vi. Ka. was a leading figure there. So were Shri Shri and Arudra in Telugu, and Faiz and Makhdoom

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in Urdu. The Kannada 'progressives' like Kumar Venkanna published an anthology of poems. Maykovsky, Neruda and other radical poets were the inspiration of Indian progressives.

The Modernist Phase

Poetry was composed in overlapping layers, progressive poetry growing side by side with romantic and 'modernist' or experimental poetry with progressive. Nevertheless, it is true to say, that by and large 'modernist' poetry 'flourished' in the fifties and sixties of this century just as progressive poetry developed self-awareness in the forties. The modernists were obsessed with the physical and the urban, the sordid and the ugly. They used free verse, and even rhythmic verse, freely. They were introspective. T. S. Eliot and the English poets of the thirties and Baudelaire, Mallarme and other French symbolists were their inspiration. It was not merely an external stimulus but a felt need that was at the root of their poetry. Buddhadeva Bose, Sudhindranath Datta, and Premendra Mitra, with others like Amiya Chakrabarthy and Samar Sen blazed the path in Bengall; Niranjan Bhagat and Suresh Joshi in Gujarati; Gokak, Adiga and R. Sharma in Kannada; Girijakumar Mathur, and Agyeya in Hindi; Kamil in Kashmiri; N. N. Kakkad and Sacchidanandan in Malayalam (the Modernist trend seems to have begun in Kerala in the sixties); Mardhekar and P. S. Rege in Marathi; Gopinath Mohanty and Sitakanta Mahapatra in Oriya; Harbhajan Singh in Punjabi; Harish and Goverdhan in Sindhi; and Wahid Akhtar, Hanafi, Balraj Komal and others in Urdu. The Telugu account mentions Arudra who, as a progressive poet, is inclined towards experimentation. The Telugu account does not speak of 'modernist' poetry. On the other hand it speaks of the Free Verse Movement, whose leader is Kindurti. It is a revolt against traditional metres which had a hold over modern Telugu poets, perhaps longer than elsewhere. There are poets in Tamil who are experimentalists, like Puviarasu and Abdul Rahman.

Digambara and Dalita

It was roughly in the seventies that many of our languages began to experience the need for a change in the tone and tenor of their poetry and, possibly, other literary forms as well. Sick with the agony, anguish, introspection and obscurity of the modernists, the old world raptures of the romantics and the loud rhetoric and 'bow-wow' of the progressives, the desire seemed to be for something simple and human but feelingfully expressed, progressive but not tendentious and loud, and intellectually agile but without cerebral somersaults. Each past phase seemed to contribute something either by way of theme or form to this new type of poetry.

It is towards some such norm of poetry that writing is evolving today in each of our languages.

We are told that in Assamese, there are three groups of poets writing *vers libre*, cadenced prose or sprung rhythm and using the grammar of imagery rather than of prose meaning like the modernists. They consist of (1) the poets who emulate the French symbolists; (2) those who take to the lore of social reality, combining socialism with imagism; (3) the neo-romantics with a thin veneer of intellectualism. One may, on the basis of satisfactory evidence, go further and say that each of the three basic groups of poets, the romantics, progressives and modernists has felt the impact of the other two groups in theme, imagery, diction, rhythm, structure or philosophy and undergone a subtle modification in each one of the components of its poetry. We are told that there are more little poetry magazines than one can keep count of in Bengali and, therefore, many more poets. But one is sure that all the reckonable ones among them can be classified into three such groups. The Hindi poetry of the seventies shows a trend towards neo-realism which is anti-establishment, full of protest against city-culture and the

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degradation of man through violence and sex-perversion. But there is also the other trend—concerned with the understanding of the socio-political and culturral reality. A third trend—the unravelling of mystic experience—is also present there (Srikant Verma, Kailash Vajapeye, etc.). In Malayalam, too, if the younger modernists are inclined towards *akavita* or 'anti-poetry' like Jagdish Chaturvedi of Hindi, and the neo-romantics become mystic poets, or 'screen-lyricists', the younger progressive continues to write committed socialistic poetry, like Kaḍammanitta Ramakrishnan. In Punjabi, the new poets turn to historical consciousness which helps them understand the misery of modern man better. Even the modernist could now and then be a humanist. The best of these poets, whatever their language, or the group to which they belong, strive for an intense insight into the meaning of existence itself. Deepak Mishra and others illustrate this trend in Oriya; Jotwani and Khemani in Sindhi; and Fazli and Mansoori in Urdu. In Tamil, recently, the younger group of progressive poets (who call themselves *vāṅambādies* or skylarks) seem to have been more dominant than the other two groups. The poets of the seventies in Urdu seem to combine the subjectivity of the modernists with the social content of the progressives.

The poetry of Narayan Surve (b. 1926) in Marathi was the poetry of one born in Bombay's slums. Several of his themes come from that life and some of his language too: its directness and slang. Gradually there grew up in Kannada, too, *Bandāya Sāhitya*, the literature of revolt. Buddanna Hingmire and Siddhalingayya are trying to contribute in their own way to the new poetry of social commitment, as Chandrashekhar Patil and Lankesh have already done. The *Bandāya* litterateurs even joined hands for a while with the old progressives, since they felt that they shared a common cause.

Six angry young poets in Andhra Pradesh called themselves *digambara* (naked) poets and revolted against the present-day social order, establishment and literature. Their voices have become rather feeble now.

The *Dalita* movement, which voices the age-old sufferings and demands of the scheduled castes, has also naturally sought expression in poetry. Some of its leading poets in Marathi are Namdev Dhasal, Daya Pawar and Keshav Meshram. There is also the rise of *śūdra* poetry in Kannada.

Both *Bandāya* and *Dalita* poetry are variations within the sphere of the poetry of social awareness. The old 'progressive' element has found a transformed expression in this fashion. The 'new' type of poetry of the seventies is fed by one or the other of the three roots with subtle modifications introduced by the remaining two.

Tradition and Innovation

While our languages have shown a remarkable power of innovation and capacity for revolt, some have also shown a strong adherence to certain traditional forms and metres, in spite of the literary revolution that has overtaken them. In Urdu, for example, the *ghazal*, which is a poetic form adopted into Urdu from Persian from early times, has continued to remain in active use, and the Renaissance poets have infused a modern sensibility into it. Hasan Naimi is even reported to have established a 'Ghazal academy' in Delhi. The *ghazal* has been 'modernized' in Sindhi and Kashmiri too.

Some Tamil poets have acknowledged the merits of traditional metres and verse forms. They, of course, use them with some changes here and there to suit their content.

Telugu has a more conservative literary history we are told: 'Even though free verse has been gaining ground, traditional poetry has not completely faded out. There are several poets who employ traditional metres though their outlook is modern' (G. Joshua, *Āndhra Purāṇam*, 1954 by M. Satyanarayana Sastri). There are other 'neo-classicists' too, like Vidwan Viswam whose *Oka Nāḍu* narrates in traditional verse the fight put up by a railway gateman against British soldiers. In Malayalam also, apart from the main trends, there is the poetry that has a neo-classical flavour in its style and metre.

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On the whole, it would seem that, in languages which still retain a strong impact of the classical element, like the diction or metres of Sanskrit in Telugu, Tamil or Malayalam poetry, or of Persian as in Urdu, Sindhi and Kashmiri poetry, the old forms are still used here and there even by some modern poets. In the other languages the ancient and medieval metrical moulds and dictional patterns have disappeared with those old phases of the languages and made way for the new forms of metre and diction suited to the present stage of linguistic evolution.

It would be instructive and even amusing to see how Sanskrit itself has participated in this task of the Renaissance. The old epic mould or *Prabandha Kāvya* absorbed modern themes like Queen Victoria and the First World War; religious topics as in P. C. Devassia's *Christubhāgavatam* and K. Balarama Panikkar's *Sri Nārāyaṇavijayam*; historical themes as in *Keraḷodayam* (1976), *Sivarājyōdayam*, *Pūrvabhāratam* (1974) and a Gandhian theme as in *Mahātma Vijaya* (1949). Kalidasa's *Meghadhūta* gave rise to a whole category of *sandeśa* or *dūta kāvyas* down to *Kākadūta* which relates a crow's survey of old Dharwar town including its hotels with their tasty fare.

It is in collections of lyrics like S. Sarma's *Jāgarana* (1963) and K. Kesavan Nair's *Naivēdyam* (1970), that modern Sanskrit poetry comes the nearest both in form and substance to the poetry of the Renaissance. But publications of this kind are very few.

After all, is there an audience or reading public for Sanskrit poetry? In theory it is world-wide, like the English reading public. In effect, it is not even as big as that of Manipuri, as it is scattered all over the world, and not concentrated in a compact Sanskrit-speaking area. In fact, elaborate researches will have to be conducted in Himachal Pradesh to locate some such narrow plot of ground. On the other hand, the poetry of the Vedas and the Upanishads, even the Gita and the Bhāgavata, finds the most accomplished and responsive reading public that any classical language can have all over the world. This fact should give us a clue to the role of Sanskrit in modern times. It will be very much alive as the mother of a great classical tradition, the source of some of the choicest treasures of the world in philosophy and mysticism. It will be a powerful element in the vocabulary of modern Indian languages, lending grace and grandeur to style, a deep and subtle rhythm, an intuitive glow and emotional precision to poetic utterance, and vividness and precision to scientific thinking, making it abstract and concrete at the same time. Any other traces of Sanskrit, which survive in these languages, can only be regarded as neo-classical remnants or archaic relics which have no specific function to fulfil, unless deliberate evocations of quaint grammar or usage or illuminating quotations are attempted. Making Sanskrit itself a vehicle of modern knowledge or literature can only wear the aspect of a curious experiment conducted for amused onlookers unless, as Israel has done with Hebrew, India adopts Sanskrit as an official language.

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Assamese

MAHENDRA BORA

The Background

Modern Assamese poetry, in sharp contrast with the modern poetry of other Indian literatures, is a late bloom. The reason for this lies in the logic of the situation itself. The concept of modernity in its broad spectrum is somehow linked with certain western values which made their inroads into Indian life just when it was busy disengaging itself from the settled moorings of traditional values. While for most Indian literatures, that date of mixed blessings—of losing freedom and of gaining modernity—coincides finally with the Battle of Plassey, Assamese literature had its date deferred by some 70 years. For the Ahoms went on flying their pennants of freedom, though with dimming confidence and diminished glory, till the Treaty of Yandaboo (1826) drew the curtain on the *ancien régime*.

Yet another reason for the delay relates to a significant misfortune that befell the Assamese. It is a fact of history that no other Indian literature, excepting perhaps Oriya, was confronted with a situation of this kind. Within ten years of Assam passing into British hands, Assamese ceased to exist as a language in the law courts as well as the educational institutions. Thus, the language of the people of the youngest province of British India was made to survive in a tortured tunnel for about 40 years. By the time this state of derecognition was repaired, as late as 1873, thanks to the relentless efforts of the American Baptist missionaries, other Indian literatures had taken enough steady strides to leave Assamese far behind. No wonder, it took time to bridge the chasm by organizing meaningfully the shambles of Assamese literature.

However, despite this extraordinary situation, Assamese writers proved themselves equal to the task. And, in consequence, it became possible for Assamese writers to herald the dawn of the modern period of their literature much before the end of the 19th century. To be more precise, from 1889 onwards, a date that coincides with the first issue of a monthly journal called *Jonākī* (Moonlight), new generations of poets began to appear on the literary stage uninterruptedly till the beginning of the forties of the 20th century. These poets enriched the treasure-house of Assamese poetry with new content, new forms and new techniques. The process, however, was halted for a brief period when the frontiers of the Second World War extended right up to the eastern districts of Assam. This was also a time when the Assamese were busy participating in the August Rebellion of 1942. Consequently, when the literary process was renewed, it showed signs of new developments in still newer directions. This necessitates treating post-war Assamese poetry as a distinctly different phase of the modern period. As far as Assamese poetry is concerned, the watershed is to be looked for in and around 1942 rather than on 15 August 1947. The elements which went into the making of what might have been a post-Independence phase of poetry in Assamese got so mixed up and merged with the post-war phase that both poetic phases became indistinguishable.

But for the fact that the post-war phase is conventionally required to be telescoped into it, the entire modern period of Assamese poetry could be described as an age that reflects the inspiration of European romanticism. And romanticism, as it manifests itself in modern Assamese poetry, is marked by the following characteristics which its original source also reveals in great abundance: the recognition of a living soul in nature; expressions of deeply personal love; interest in the supernatural; re-creation of the medieval lores and legends; sympathetic treatment of the commonplace; a sense of revolt against conventions; an experimentation with the language of daily use; and a constant endeavour to devise new verse-forms. And the beginnings of this new trend of poetry came through contact with modern Bengali literature rather than from the fountainhead of English literature.

Period of Transition

Any survey of modern Assamese poetry must take note of certain attempts and achievements that occurred during a

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brief stretch of time that might be called the period of transition. This period begins with a verse-chronicle, *Belimārar Burañji* (History of the Sunset), composed between 1838 and 1846 by Visveswar Vaidyadhipa (19th century). This is considered the first major poem after the *Daraṅg-Rājbaṅgśāvali* (1806) had drawn a curtain over the preceding period. From the standpoint of literary history, what is significant about the work is the poet's conscious endeavour to extricate its language from the archaic diction and to introduce certain new verse-forms in its metre. However, it must be conceded, the work is more streamlined verse than effervescent poetry. It is endowed with little emotional warmth and still less imaginative touches, but it did arouse the Assamese scene from its slumber.

Gopinath Chakravarty's (19th century), *Kalaṅka Bhañjan* (The Removal of Blemishes, mid-19th century), based on the theme of Lord Krishna assuring his paramour Radha of the restoration of her eclipsed reputation, is in literary terms, a similar work. In this long poem, Chakravarty made two very bold experiments with language and metre. First, he introduced a diction which is heavily littered with vocables and idioms current in the local speech prevalent in the near-western part of modern Assam. Needless to say, it conforms to the romantic ideal of experimentation with the language of speech-islands as was done by Burns. As for the second experiment, he built his metre in the syllabic style found in the oral tradition of Assamese poetry.

These two poets, along with Purnakanta Sarma (Pūrṇakānta Śarma) also of the 19th century, who wrote an old style *kāvya* titled *Nala Carit* (The Life-story of Nala, 1889), constitute the first group of transitional poets. Their importance lies in the fact that they resuscitated the breath of poetry by striking a pleasant compromise between the spirit of tradition and that of modernity. For their similes and metaphors, descriptions and episodes, they drew heavily from the inexhaustible storehouse of classical poetry. But they departed from convention in their choice of metrical music; here, they built a half-way house between the two ideals—one ossified and traditional, the other fresh and modern. In fact, their poems could be sung and chanted in the traditional style as well as read and recited in the modern style of enjoying poetry.

The second group of traditional poets who tried to introduce a certain new spirit, with little or no attachment to the past, includes Kinaram Satriya, Dayaram Chetiai, Dharmakanta Buragohain, Govindaram Bhuyan and Nidh Levi Farewell, all belonging to the 19th century. They were all regular contributors to the pages of *Oruṇodoi* (spelt as such by the organizers, though correctly transliterated it should be *Aruṇoday*, meaning 'Sunrise'), the first Assamese monthly journal. It was founded by the American Baptists as early as 1846 and continued to appear till the end of 1882. These poets wrote verses on various aspects of modern life, such as the printing press, the fame of Calcutta, and the beauty of the newly founded Assam towns. Nidh Levi Farewell (1846–80), being a new convert, wrote some poems introducing therein Christian religious themes. These poems are marked by a fine combination of Vaishnava diction and Christian ethics.

It is the third group of transitional poets, of whom the most notable are Baladev Mahanta (1850–95), Ratneswar Mahanta (1864–93) and Durgaprasad Majinder Barua (1870–1928), who actually paved the way for a clear articulation of the modern temper in Assamese poetry. Baladev Mahanta's poetry, despite containing certain didactic exhortations, is singularly free of the loaded imageries and learned allusions of his predecessors. It is the elemental simplicity of life which is delineated in his lines. Ratneswar Mahanta's forte was capturing the beauty of such commonplaces as a dove, a glow-worm or a lightning-flash. His *Gāvalīyā Bovārī* (The Village Daughter-in-Law) is a poem to be noted. He shows considerable mastery over metre in his poems and introduces several hybrid verse-forms by way of experimenting with cross-pollinations of different worn-out forms. Parenthetically it may be noted, he is the first in modern times to write on prosody. As for Majinder Barua, he was a kindred spirit of the senior Mahanta; so much so that his lines contain the same simplicity of expression and rapidity of movement which mark the poems of Mahanta.

Towards the Upsurge

The two great poets, Bholanath Das (Bholānāth Dās, 1858–1929) and Kamalakanta Bhattacharya (Kamalākānta Bhaṭṭācārya, 1853–1927), present some problems to the literary historians of Assamese poetry. Going by date, they certainly belong to the period of transition, but to go by poetic temper, they are quite inside the circle, though nearer the circumference than the centre. Kamalakanta went on writing poetry till his death, while Bholanath closed his poetic career as early as 1884. Kamalakanta signed the first volume of his poems, *Cintānal* (The Flames of Thought) as late as 1890, to be followed by *Cintātaraṅgini* (The Waves of Thought) in 1933. Bholanath, on the other hand, signed his last volume of poems, *Cintātaraṅgini* (Rippling Thoughts) as early as 1884, completing *Sītāharaṇ Kāvya* (Capturing of Sita) also by that date.

Bholanath Das is an unforgettable name in the history of Assamese poetry because of his sterling contribution to all three aspects of poetry: form, technique and metre. For instance, some of his poems are the earliest specimens of lyric in Assamese poetry. It may be noted that the modern period of Assamese poetry synchronizes with the unprecedented growth and popularization of the lyric. The kind of lyric modern Assamese poets learnt from the European masters is entirely different from the one that folk-songs and loose poetic compositions, meant for tunes, represent

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despite their having a common name. Lyrics in modern Assamese poetry are built on a completely different form than what Palgrave's words suggest, when he speaks of a poem turning on 'some single thought, feeling or situation'. In that sense, it should be more than a song, the success of which hinges on it being a vivid expression of some personal experience. It is this new genre of poetry which Bholanath introduced in some of his best poems.

Bholanath also gave the readers of Assamese poetry their first taste of that 'stately and majestic measure', blank verse. His *Sītāharaṇ Kāvya* is a pioneering work in this direction. Of course, Ramakanta Chowdhury (1846–89) is a contemporary innovator of Assamese blank verse. But it is Bholanath who first tried his hand at it as early as in 1871. Blank verse, with its rhythm and uninterrupted free flow from line to line (as though the measured milestones of poetic rhythm do not exist at all), was quite a new experience for the readers of Assamese poetry. Bholanath replaced the soft and sonorous phrases of end-stopped measures with the squeaking and grating type of words so as to gain a variegated texture of the rhythm ideal for it. To do this, he drafted a large percentage of vocables from the Sanskrit lexicon. This is no different from Milton leaning on Latin and Michael Madhusudan falling back on Sanskrit, but Bholanath was criticized by his contemporaries for his language being 'Anglo-Benglo Assamese', that is, a curious cocktail of English, Bengali and Assamese. To be just, his contemporaries were unnecessarily critical of him and could scarcely estimate his real achievements. Perhaps he did occasionally lapse into some staccato effect, but he gave Assamese poetry its first taste of a new type of orchestral music and inspired many more new exponents to follow him.

To speak of that other early lark of modern Assamese poetry, Kamalakanta Bhattacharya, is to speak of patriotism as an aspect of romanticism. It is here that the rills of the western elements of romantic poetry get lost in the river that flows from the more abundant spring of national tradition. For, if the ideas and passions of the French Revolution inflamed patriotism in western poetry, it is the intense awareness of the political thralldom of our country and the consequent pride in the national heritage of this land which provided the necessary stimulus for generating a similar mood in modern Assamese poetry. Kamalakanta is the first and foremost among the moderns to represent that distinctive angle of romanticism. His greatest contribution lies in transforming the poetry of the succeeding time into something which is more human and less divine in content while being more socio-philosophical and less religio-ethical in approach. As for his imageries and diction, it may be noted that he resembles the Pre-Romantics of English poetry on more than one count.

A third significant name, to be mentioned in the company of Bholanath and Kamalakanta, is Balinarayan Burrah. If Byron's satirical poems are a part of the European romantic heritage, this bashful poet, who was an engineer by profession, must be noted. It is he who made satire an art-form in Assamese poetry. At least two of his poems, *Dāngarīyā* (The Grandee) and *Asamīyā Bābu* (An Assamese Gentleman) will remain evergreen pieces of satire in the entire anthology of humorous Assamese poems. His method is not to give vent to any spleen but to expose the incongruities in man's character and, thereby, give readers occasion for boisterous laughter. He also proved convincingly that only the syllabic style was suitable for driving in the poniard thrusts up to the hilt.

Advent of Romanticism

After these precursors and forerunners began the era of *Jonākī*, which ushered in unmistakable manifestations of the romantic spirit and drew the final curtain over the *fin-de-siècle* spirit still lingering in the world of Assamese poetry. This phase of Assamese literature is notable for the work of a great romantic trio—Lakshminath Bezbarua (1864–1938), Chandrakumar Agarwalla (1867–1938) and Hem Goswami (1872–1928). While Bezbarua remains the greatest literary figure of modern Assamese literature, Chandrakumar is a greater poet by far, than the other two. Chandrakumar's output is small—just two slender volumes, *Pratimā* (The Icon, 1914) and *Vīṇ-Barāgī* (The Roving Monk with a Lyre, 1923). But to quote Bezbarua on *Pratimā*: 'Even though the icon is a tiny one, yet it is of gold unalloyed' (tr.). In the same strain, it may be said of *Vīṇ-Barāgī* that even though the melody of the roving monk's lyre is soft and subdued, it nevertheless reflects on earth the quivers of some song celestial.

Chandrakumar could not, perhaps, attain equal success in all his poems. But there are some, such as *Niyar* (The Dewdrops), *Mādhurī* (The Sweetie), *Tejimalā* (Cinderella) and *Bankuvarī* (The Sylvan Fairy), which are precious pearls of poetry. *Niyar* is one of the finest landscape-poems in all Assamese poetry. There are two very colourful key-imageries in this poem: The dewdrops sparkling on blades of grass are perhaps so many drops of tears shed by a wailing star, which solidified and became a handful of pearls. Or perhaps, they are so many gems dropping on the earth from the unstrung necklaces of some fairies dancing in the cloudland all night long. With such exquisite imagery, Chandrakumar conjures up the magic beauty that shrouds the borderland between dream and reality. As with Wordsworth, the simple beauties and known surroundings of nature become transformed by Chandrakumar into something mysterious and unknown.

Mādhurī describes a young maiden's beauty, each aspect of which is captured with a metaphor that is like a gem of distinctive colour. But the hue of each merges almost imperceptibly with the soft shades of the adjacent metaphors

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to create a complete entity with an all-enveloping idea. To quote a few lines:

It is just like a floating song,
heard, and yet unheard mute;
A trilling tune of great melody,
piped from a faraway flute.

It is like getting crossed
for a second, then getting gay;
An anger that peeps and pops across,
then in a moment wanders away.

She has a pair of steaming eyes,
none knows, if it smiles or weeps;
She wears a brow sweet and sharp,
both joy and sorrow that sweeps.

Hers is a form lissom and lovely,
at once revealing and concealing;
With her soft footsteps she walks,
a mystery: going or withdrawing. (tr.)

Chandrakumar's other two great poems, *Bankuvarī* and *Tejīmalā* deal with themes of supernatural character. Here, he follows Coleridge with the same sincerity he does Wordsworth in his Nature-poems. He paints the unknown and the improbable as though they belong to the world of everyday acquaintance. To enjoy their beauty, one must be prepared for a 'willing suspension of disbelief'.

In a third group of poems he sings the paean of eternal humanity. It is with this theme that he attained his supreme success in the long poem *Vīṇ-Barāgī*, which presents a magnificent symphony of manifold Eastern and Western thought-strands. All the different notes are brought into a common focus of faith that states that the real church of God lies in the humanity before us. Thus, as far as the romanticism in Assamese poetry is concerned, Chandrakumar represents both its beginning and its fulfilment.

Bezbaroa, the titan of Assamese literature, published in his lifetime only a single collection of poems, *Kadamkali* (The Buds of Kadamba), which appeared in 1913. His second collection, *Padumkali* (The Lotus Buds, 1964) came out posthumously. Bezbaroa himself testifies that writing poetry was for him only a pastime of his leisure hours. Despite this limitation, he has written some memorable pieces of infinite beauty which, to quote Neog, 'deserve to be printed in letters of gold and kept enframed' (tr.). Among the outstanding poems in his first anthology are *Mālatī*, the luscious love-lyric, *Dhanbar āru Ratanī* the first-ever literary ballad in Assamese, and *Asam Saṅgīt* (Music of Assam), a drumming panegyric of his motherland that is intertwined with a deep feeling of nostalgia. *Dhanbar āru Ratanī* is a poem that is among the 10 best Assamese poems of all time. In it he weaves a magic carpet of emotion which transits the beauty of its simple floral designs with limpid lyricism and adhesive imagery.

For Hem Goswami, too, poetry remained secondary. He wrote only one slender volume of poems, *Phular Cāki* (The Nosegay of Flowers), which appeared in 1907. His poems may lack wings, but they are invested with a rare type of sculpturesque beauty. Of his poems, two deserve some special notice: Puvā (The Dawn) and Priyatamar Ciṭhi (An Epistle from the Darling). The first owes its inspiration to the very suggestive cover-page painting of the newly started *Jonākī* (1889). With the approach of dawn, the silent lyre of life revives its quivers and resonances—that was the symbolic theme of the painting. And the poem gives a splendid description at once of a real dawn as well as a literary renaissance, by effecting a marvellous blending of its overtone with the undertone. As for the second poem, it represents the first and is at the same time, the most technically flawless specimen of a sonnet in Assamese. Constructed on Petrarchan lines, it is marked by a clear demarcation into two broad stanzas, the octave and the sestet. While the two quatrains (4.4) of the octave are clearly discernible, the two tercet (3.3) of the sestet are not so easily separated. Instead, the sestet suggests three indistinctly linked couplets. However, Goswami displays his mastery over the craft by harnessing the rhyme-scheme. But mere technical excellence is not the entire reason for the poem's quality. The poet's real triumph lies in his ability to make his poem truly a 'moment's monument', even though there is nothing exotic in it.

Away from the Mainstream

Away from the mainstream, two other significant poets shone brilliantly alongside the romantic trio. Of the two, Padmanath Gohain Barua (Padmanāth Gohāin Baruvā, 1871–1946) was a writer whose majestic command over all other branches of literature was such as to make his achievements in poetry pale into insignificance in comparison. He wrote a miniature epic, *Līlā* (1901), packed with autobiographical reminiscences. Its central theme is woven around a personal bereavement, the premature death of his first wife. Though planned on a grand scale—his ambition was to make it another Wordsworthian *Prelude*—the poem, as executed, lacks depth. Nevertheless, couched in blank verse, it is rich with some very fine portrayals of landscape and numerous purple patches. Gohain Barua's other book, *Juraṇi* (The Cooling Draught, 1900), contains some remarkably beautiful fourteen-line pieces. Though often referred to as such, these are but miscalled sonnets. Of course, if there is such a thing as the Tagorean sonnet constructed as a duodouzain and a couplet (12.2), these are some excellent specimens of the genre.

The other poet, Anandachandra Agarwalla (1874–19[illegible]

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is at once a prince of the realm of translated poetry and master of the literary ballad. His two collections, *Jilikani* (The Sparklings, 1920) and the posthumously published *Padumani* (The Lotus Pond, 1974), abound in some of the finest gems of translated poetry. It must be kept in mind that translation is not easy; to quote Mark Twain, 'Translation, like woman, may be either beautiful or faithful, rarely both.' It is doubly so in the case of poetry. But Agarwalla gave Assamese poetry some rare specimens. Had he not pointed them out, it would have been impossible to locate the originals; yet it is amazing to find, when comparing both, that not a single word of the original had escaped translation. In fact, instead of translations he has given readers transcreations. As for his literary ballads, he is the supreme artist of the genre in Assamese. His *Pāneśai* (The Darling) is a memorable poem drenched in the dewdrops of anguish and glowing with fine touches of delicate insights. And his *Phulkovar* (The Flower-Prince), a dramatic conception of 10 small cantos, is a remarkable triumph of art in this genre, with its lyrical verve and sustained imagination.

The Massive Expanse

After them, it is all like the red river Brahmaputra, which flows through Assam, entering its borders at first with slender frame but great sweep and, thereafter, spreading into a massive expanse that inundates the entire plains, making them more and more fertile every time the river recedes. Needless to say, it is difficult to provide a satisfactory account of such a massive expanse of any literary movement by considering the achievement of every single poet of some significance. Therefore, only a swift survey of the tablelands is being made here.

First to be taken note of is Hiteswar Barbarooah (Hiteśvar Barbaruvā, 1876–1939), who drank heavily from the Western classics. He has written several blank verse *kāvyas*, all based on historical themes. However, his *Birahiṇī Bilāp* (Lamentations of the Lady in Separation, 1896) is different; here the poet makes a brief excursion into the land of passionate romance. Of seven cantos, it is one of the best Assamese *kāvyas* of the modern times. His other achievement is a whole cluster of brilliant sonnets. As sonneteer, he displays a definitely romantic temper in experimenting with the form. He seems to have possessed more than abundantly that peculiar talent which mixes colours in unorthodox ways to get tints of exceptional hue. Thus, several of his sonnets scarcely conform to any copybook type. However, his forte is the Shakespearean hallmark of the 'final clinching blow of hammer' in the couplet that rounds off the sonnet. One of his finest sonnets is *Kāṇar Thuriyā* (The Ear-Ornament), an all-time great by any standard.

Another poet of the flood whom we should consider *sui generis* is Raghunath Chaudhuri (Raghunāth Chaudhurī, 1879–1966). Unlike Barbarooah, he had very little of formal education. But he has written some of the finest bird-poems and about a score of no less beautiful flower-poems. In his *Ketekī* (The Nightingale, 1918), a poem of five small cantos, he traces its beauty in a whole series of sparkling metaphors. Like Wordsworth, he also feels that the nightingale represents no bird but 'a voice', 'a mystery'. His flower-poems, such as *Golāp* (The Rose), *Bahāgīr Biyā* (Marriage of the Spring-Princess) and *Mādhurī* (The Sweetie), are matchless in poetic music, with assonance and alliteration, as well as in pictorial descriptions with colours running riot.

A whole crowd of other major poets flourished during this period, in the forties of this century, but they also present an 'enigmatic family likeness' in as much as they all are concerned with one or more of the three perennial subjects of romantic poetry, viz. personal love, patriotic feelings and a sense of mysticism. There is, however, one name which, though belonging very much to the mainstream, deserves to be considered separately. This is Ambikagiri Raichowdhury (Ambikāgiri Rāy Caudhurī, 1885–1967), the most colourful literary personality of modern times. He is equally at ease handling any of the three perennial subjects of romantic poetry. His *Tumi* (Thee, 1915) is a long poem, couched in faultless decamoric lines and spread into seven small cantos, imbued in deep mystic faith. To him, the attainment of the supreme bliss of coming face to face with God involves a graduated scale of ascent up the staircase of love. The poem opens with a sensuous description of the physical beauty of the poet's beloved; it is followed by descriptions of the eternal baby and of a loving mother. These are there only to drive home the basic point that all earthly beauties are but finite renderings of beauty infinite. Thus, in him, passionate love on the personal plane is lost in the abstruse longing for the Divine.

As a writer of patriotic verse, Raichowdhury represents the standpoint of an uncompromising rebel. In fact, there is no room for his patriotic feelings to be just skin-deep, in view of his profound involvement with the Freedom Movement as a member of a terrorist group. He was awarded a term of rigorous imprisonment for throwing a bomb at the car of a British Governor. It was in prison that he composed some of his most powerful patriotic poems. His *Eito Nahay* (By No Means) is the most unforgettable poem of its kind. However, in later life, his poetry caught not a little of the tangential hues of some sepiate radiance of Gandhian thought. His *Karā Mok Biśvar Jhārudār* (Make Me a Scavenger of the Earth), included in the anthology *Anubhūti* (The Emotion, 1924), is a splendid poem of this type.

Among the poets of mysticism, Durgeswar Sarma (1882–1961) and Nalinibala Devi (1898–1978) stand out most prominently. Sarma's mysticism is more metaphysical than just intuitive. In his two anthologies, *Añjali* (The Oblations, 1910) and *Nivedan* (The Surrender, 1915), he has raised a

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score of fundamental questions on Birth and Death, which he tries to interpret in terms of the *Vedantic* life-views with occasional incursions into ideas held by the *Sankhya*. To him, death is not a 'ceaseless end'; and birth is but a fresh awakening at the end of each slumber of the soul. Through all his poems runs an inflexible faith in the imperishability of the soul and the essential determinism of human existence. In marked contrast, Nalinibala's mysticism has nothing discursive about it and is just a temper. In her two anthologies, *Sandhiyār Sur* (The Twilight Melodies, 1928) and *Saponar Sur* (The Dream Melodies, 1943), she makes a passionate plea at the altar of God for the healing balm of infinite bliss to be given to her anguished soul. All her imageries are so beautifully attuned to the central burden of her poems that they enhance the impact of the poetry with far-reaching significance. For instance, the imagery of a swarm of birds returning to their nests in the twilight hours of the evening suggests instantaneously the yearning of the soul for its native abode, to which it would return when the drama of life terminates.

Among poets who write of love, Jatindranath Dowerah (1892–1964) and Ganesh Gogoi (1907–38) merit special mention. Dowerah is noteworthy not by virtue of any richness of ideas or any luxuriance of metaphor, but for the sheer sweep of his liquid music. In fact, more than one critic testifies to his poetry being a magnificent combination of Shelley's melancholy and Keats's music. The final impression his poetry leaves is that it is filled with the broken sighs of frustrated lovers and the deep moans of ship-wrecked sailors. He has a very simple anodyne to offer: snap all connections with the past. It is in him that the modern Assamese love-lyric finds its fulfilment. To go beyond is to write poetry that is mere truth and foam—and Ganesh Gogoi's poetry is almost that. As he pours into his lines the aching pains of unrequited love, he indulges in meaningless phrases of sonorousness and outbursts of sentimentality.

At least four poets writing patriotic poetry—Padmadhar Chaliha (1895–1968), Jyotiprasad Agarwalla (1903–51), Prasannalal Chowdhury (b.1902) and Binandachandra Barua (b. 1905)— have signed their names indelibly. All of them have enriched their ideas, in one form or another, by incorporating Gandhian thoughts on social philosophy. At the same time, they are the only poets who have carefully avoided the banality of versified politics miscalled poetry. Chaliha's forte lies in painting the beauties of the mother country lavishly. Prasannalal is inspired by a militant zeal to reform. His *Agnimantra* (The Baptism of Fire, 1952) and *Cāneki Kavitā* (Specimen Poems, 1965) contain the best of his militant poetry. Jyotiprasad, on the other hand, is at once a philosopher-historian and a prophet-artist. He uses three different tubes of pigment, each completely opposed to the other two—that is, Gandhian ethics, Marxist sociology and Tagorean aesthetics—and mixes them together on a common palette to paint a picture of society in an unborn future. Binandachandra, a wizard with words, conjures up the country's glorious past and makes it a vivid reality alongside the drumming sounds of assonance and dissonance.

There are many other significant poets during the period under review. For instance, a small group of poets came under the powerful influence of Tagore. They include Ratnakanta Barkakati (1897–1963), Parvatiprasad Baruva (1904–64) and Kamaleswar Chaliha (b.1904). While Barkakati tries to imitate the philosophical attitude of Tagore, Baruva reminds his readers of typically Tagorean moods and Chaliha's lines are redolent with the whole plethora of expression, metaphor and metre typical of Tagore.

Two other poetic stalwarts of the period are Dimbeswar Neog (1900–66) and Sailadhar Rajkhowa (1892–1968), who between them share the credit for creating an appropriate ballad metre in Assamese, with *dularī* verses of 6-6-8 measure in a heptet form of stanza, a real substitute for the English Alexandrine. Rajkhowa has penned the best elegiac poem in Assamese, *Niyati* (The Destiny, 1936). This poem laments the tragic death of another poet in a boat disaster.

Dandinath Kalita (Daṇḍināth Kalitā, 1890–1950) will be remembered in the future as the greatest Assamese poet of satiric verses. His *Rahgharā* (The Honeycomb, 1916), *Ragar* (The Comics, 1922) and *Bahurūpī* (The Chameleon, 1926) are three great achievements of the genre. Maheshchandra Devagoswami (b. 1917) is the poet who introduced parody in Assamese poetry. His parody-poems, collected in *Kimāścaryyam* (What a Wonder, 1950), may well live as long as the originals he has parodied. These originals have been composed by Devkanta Barooah (b. 1914). The lines of his *Sāgar Dekhicā* (Have You Ever Seen the Sea, 1945) will flow from the tongues of youth as long as romance lives. To quote a few lines from him:

Have you ever seen the sea? Never?
I have not also seen it.
But then, I have heard of it: a blue
expanse of waters, boundless billows
stretching into far horizons.

My heart too is blue like the sea,
shrouded with anguish.
You have not seen it, where so many waves
of passion have risen and broken?
touching the rims of your memory?

So, you have not heard the riotous music,
tossed in the tempest of my heart?
Nor, have you felt the gentle whisper
of spring in the garden of flowers?

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You might have seen the rainbow,
a glory of light across the monsoon clouds.
But have you ever seen the riot of colours
in my heart's firmament, radiant with love? (tr.)

It may be noted that the technique of Barooah's poetry lies in a subtle mixing of three different elements: dramatic monologue, the language of everyday conversation, and a rejection of punctuation at regular intervals set against strict regularity of line-lengths.

Post-war Poetry

With the nightmares of the Second World War, which Assam experienced during the penultimate phase of battle, a wind of change swept through the world of modern Assamese poetry. To the poets of the time, poetry ceased to be anything in the nature of a favourite pastime of the imagination. To them, poetry came to mean a marriage of left politics with free verse of muscular rhythm. It rejects everything traditional, love becomes a taboo and the concept of beauty an abracadabra. To the angry young men of the late forties, who threw off all chains of conventionalism, class struggle and libido became more meaningful than love and mysticism as perennial sources of poetic inspiration.

After a decade of polemics and protest, however, they saw the truth that this was not enough. Despite the banalities of life, the most important function of a poet is to write poetry. Hence the poets who flourished after India's independence began to think it necessary to study something of traditional aesthetics alongside Marxist dialectics and Freudian psychology. This, in course of time, led to the emergence of several different schools of new poetry in Assamese literature. There is little wonder they should speak in different languages, in diverse idioms, with variegated tones and, above all, on several distinctive planes as well. Even at the start of the eighties, there are at least three sharply different schools of Assamese poets.

First, there is the school which has been powerfully influenced by the aesthetic ideals of French Symbolism. The poets of this school pin their faith on the notion that poetry 'should not inform, but suggest and evoke; not name the things, but create their atmosphere'. For them, the semantic overtone does not contain the meaning of a poem; it lies buried behind a cluster of images. In fact, it is like a new mysticism, wherein they pursue the beautiful face of words rather than of an illusory God. In their poetry, they aim at a forest of symbols, images and allusions, all of which combine to produce a magnificent symphony of the poet's unique personal experience. Some of the most significant anthologies of this school are *Sūryya Heno Nāmi Āhe Ei Nadīyedi* (The Sun is Said to Come Descending by This River, 1963), *Nirjanatār Śabda* (The Sound of the Silence, 1966), *Phuli Thakā Sūryyamukhī Phulṭor Pine* (Towards the Blooming Sunflower, 1971) and *Golāpi Jāmur Lagna* (The Raspberry-tinted Moment, 1977)—all written by Nilmani Phukan Jr. (b. 1933); *Soṇālī Jāhāj* (The Golden Ship, 1977) by Bhaven Barua (b. 1941); and *Svarbor* (The Tones, 1977) by Harekrishna Deka (b. 1948).

Then comes the school, whose poets are steeped in the lore of social poetry. It must be borne in mind that they have also imbibed something of Symbolism, though, of course, with a difference. As they learn their technique from Eliot, Auden and Spender, they refrain from any endeavour to reproduce photographically the cold facts of social reality. They view the state of things through a prism and analyse the spectrum in terms of symbols and images. They are concerned with presenting and, unlike the Symbolists, not at all with communicating, some facets of contemporary reality through 'a subtly articulated pattern of metaphors'. In other words, their poetry reflects something of socialism cross-pollinated with imagism. Some of the noteworthy anthologies of this school are *Bālicandā* (The Sand-dusts, 1959) and *Manmayūrī* (The Peacock of Mind, 1965) by Hem Barua (1915–77), which represent the mood of anti-romanticism most effectively; *Svākṣar* (The Signature, 1965) by Syed Abdul Malik (b. 1919), a delicate nosegay of sentimental social poems; and *Āgantuk* (The Expected Visitor, 1963) by Keshav Mahanta (b. 1927), which is imbued with an apocalyptic vision of a socialist future. It is with Hiren Bhattacharya (b. 1931), whose best anthologies are *Mor Deś Mor Premar Kavitā* (Poems of My Country, My Love, 1972) and *Bibhinna Dinar Kavitā* (Poems of Different Days, 1977), that the ideas of this school achieve fulfilment.

On the outer fringe of these two groups, there is a third group bound loosely together. To view them from another end, they are neither soldiers of Socialism nor songsters of Symbolism. In fact, they project in their poetry something of neo-romanticism with a thin veneer of intellectualism. Navakanta Barua (Navakānta Baruvā, b. 1926) is the most significant poet of this group. He undoubtedly played the role of trend-setter with his slender volume, *He Araṇya He Mahānagar* (Thou Forest, Thou Metropolis), which saw the light in 1951. Some of his other significant anthologies are *Eṭi Duṭi Eghāraṭi Tārā* (One Two Eleven Stars, 1958) and *Mor Āru Pṛthivīr* (Of Mine and of the Earth, 1973). Another major poet of the group is Hari Barkakati (Hari Barkākati, b. 1927), who has signed a slender volume, *Konobā Śītar Eṭā Bagā Sandhiyāt* (In a White Evening of the Winter, 1973); to him, love is a cerebral affair. A few other good anthologies of this kind are *Rangājiyā* (The Red Dragon-fly, 1978) by Mahim Bora (b. 1927); *Jātismar* (The Man who Remembers His Earlier Births, 1961) and *Ei Nadīyedi* (By this River, 1969) by Mahendra Bora (b. 1929); *Ban Pharingar Raṅg* (The Colour of the Wild Grasshopper, 1967), *Samīpeṣu* (To, 1977) and

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Dinar Pācat Din (Day after Day, 1977) by Nirmalprabha Bardoloi (b. 1931). In all these anthologies, a marked tendency to lean towards Imagism is easily discernible.

All these new poets, despite their diverse affiliations, believe in certain common traits of good poetry. For instance, they all stand for formless poetry. To them, a poem is a poem; it is neither a sonnet nor a triolet. As for their ideal of metre, they have chosen *vers libre*, sprung rhythm and cadenced prose as the raiment of their thought-content. As the unit of measure in Assames metre is absolutely different from the one current in English metre, the imitation has called for some capacity for innovation. So, the Assamese poets have introduced variable rhythm in place of fixed metre to transform the whole thing into *vers libre*. Thus, they have replaced rigidity with fluidity, and fixity with plasticity to achieve their formless forms.

A new technique which these poets employ requires special notice, for without being aware of it one may be tempted to call their poetry obscure. The technique involves rejection of the logical nexus of words. What they attempt is to weave a tapestry of imageries based entirely on the association of ideas. They merely present a cluster of apparently disjointed imageries, which operates, not on the logical plane, but on the pure emotive level of experience.

With all these new horizons before them, many more new poets have come forward to join their elders. Perhaps in no other branch of modern Assamese literature has there been such a steady flow of new blood. Some of the most recent volumes of poetry are *Dhṛtarāṣṭra* (1977) by Gautam Barua (b. 1941); *Dīrgha Dinar Pratikṣāre* (With Waitings of Long Days, 1980) by Rabindra Bora (b. 1939); and *Kuvalī Baraphar Nadīt* (In the River of Mists and Snows, 1975) by Chiranjiv Jain (b. 1951). There are others who are still to sign an anthology of their own, but who have contributed significant poetry. They include Miku Singh Rajput, Gayatri Konwar, Syed Abdul Halim, Samir Abdul Halim, Samir Tanti and Archana Puzari. The endeavour of all these poets has resulted in new Assamese poetry becoming what J. Isaacs speaks of with reference to the new English poetry: 'In texture modern poetry is a poetry of nuances. In structure it is a balance of tensions and conflicts. At its worst, it is a cluster of disorganized and incoherent fragments. At its best, it is a dome of many coloured glass, staining the white radiance of eternity.'

To sum up, modern Assamese poetry has telescoped that whole age of English romantic poetry dominated by the poets beginning from Wordsworth to Swinburne and Rossetti. In other words, Assamese poets of the period have re-lived the whole set of experiences through which all the above-mentioned poets in English literature passed. Besides, the Assamese poets have also looked in every direction to enrich their own poetic sensibilities with the ideas of Dylan Thomas and Rainer Maria Rilke, Baudelaire and Mallarme, Kahlil Gibran and Pablo Neruda.

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Bengali
Phase I: Before Tagore

ALOK RAY

The Period of Transition

Whether changes in the political scene directly cause changes in the norms of a country's literature may be questioned, but everyone admits that the spread of the British rule in Bengal was mainly responsible for the total transformation of Bengali literature. The end of the medieval and the beginning of the modern period did of course depend on complex changes in the political, economic and social circumstances. The political fortunes of Bengal, for instance, were indeed decided at the Battle of Plassey, but the Company's rule in itself did not exert any immediate impact on the life of Bengal. One had to wait for this till the second decade of the 19th century when the people were sufficiently exposed to English education and western thought. The teaching of English for practical purposes that had started earlier had no immediate direct impact on Bengali literature. The *Padāvali* (the Vaishnaba lyrics) and narrative literature of old was still in fashion, and the *kavigān* (public demonstration of extemporary songs and recitals) that emerged was only the old poetic practice offered in a new context. Historians call this the age of transition. The poets, however, hardly had any clear idea of the nature of the coming changes. At least Iswarchandra Gupta (1812–59), supposed to be the first poet of the modern period, cannot rightfully make this claim. A foreigner may understandably have wrong notions of this poet ('a sort of Indian Rabelais' for John Beames, the Orientalist), but when Bengali critics also come to compare him to Dryden or Pope, it becomes a simple perversion of history. Unlike most Bengali writers of the time, Iswarchandra knew no English, and only later in life acquired a modest command of the language. Bankimchandra Chatterji (Caṭṭopādhyāy), for all his reverence for the master, had this to say: 'He was ignorant and uneducated. He knew no language but his own, and was singularly narrow and unenlightened in his views' (*Essays and Letters*). Iswarchandra, the last poet of the old school, was not necessarily the first of the Moderns.

However, it should be borne in mind that genuine modern poetry had not begun to be written in the other regional languages of India when Iswarchandra wrote his poetry (1831–59). The inception of modern Bengali literature (not poetry) did begin with Iswarchandra's disciples. He himself was chiefly a journalist, and the publishing of *Saṁbād Prabhākar* (weekly at first since 28 January 1831, then changed into a daily eight years later) was his most important achievement. He was also responsible for a number of other periodicals like *Saṁbād Ratnāvali* (24 July 1832), *Pāṣaṇḍapiraṇ* (20 June, 1846) and *Saṁbād Sādhuraṅjan* (August 1847). These magazines carried most of his verses and they are characterized by a love of banter, alliteration, play upon words, and vulgarity. He wrote both verse and prose mainly to fill up the pages of his periodicals. Always submissive to popular taste, he could display at the same time entirely contrary views in his writings. One should not, therefore, call him either a progressive or a reactionary. *Saṁbād Prabhākar* regularly published a group of young poets who followed traditional modes. Rangalal Bandyopadhyay, Dinabandhu Mitra, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, Dwarakanath Adhikary, Manomohan Basu and others were in this group. Their names are recorded for historical, not poetic, reasons.

Romance and Patriotism

Of them only Rangalal Bandyopadhyay (Raṅgalāl Bandyopādhyāy, 1827–87) later attained any poetic reputation. Educated at a missionary school and at Hooghly College, he served later as a Deputy Collector and Deputy Magistrate. His poetic career began with songs and playscripts for the village *jātrā*, and he was a *protégé* of Iswarchandra for a period. Later, however, in the preface to *Padminīr Upākhyān* (1858), he explained thus his poetic preferences: 'I have studied English poetry more than anything else, and to compose Bengali poetry in that pure vein has been an old habit of mine.' That he was also well-versed in Sanskrit literature is amply borne out by his verse translations of *Ṛtusaṁhāra* and *Kumārasaṁbhava*. He also knew Oriya well, and his work *Kāñcikāverī* (1880) 'a heroic narrative of Orrisa', should be remembered as an early example of Bengal's interest in other Indian literatures. From his early years he practised translation from English poetry, and his Bengali version of *The Hermit* and *Batracomyomakia* (a Greek parody of the epics of Homer in translation), both by Thomas Parnell, and both published in 1858, were quite popular at one time. His reputation, however, rests on his narrative poems. Three exercises in heroic poetry were based on tales from Todd's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. The forms of English

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Romantic narrative poetry were before him. Probably he sought to follow Scott, Moore and Byron. The ancient history of Rajasthan aroused and enkindled feelings of heroism and patriotism in him. Such tales of Rajasthan later also came to be repeatedly used in Bengali literature. *Padminīr Upākhyān*, known as Rangalal's greatest work, is not a proper epic. Translations or adaptations from English poems have been incorporated in it, and its chief excellence is in the strain of patriotism running through it. *Karmadevī* (1862) and *Surasundarī* (1868) are also historical romances in verse. By that time, *Meghnādbadh Kāvya* by Madhusudan had already been published which reduced Rangalal's appeal to newer readers. To the lovers of older poetry, however, fondness for Rangalal remained unimpaired for quite some time.

Until the advent of Tagore a feeble current of older poetic modes continued to flow through the 19th century. Thus even after Michael Madhusudan we come across poets like Krishnachandra Majumdar (1834–1907), Harischandra Mitra (1838–72), Ganeschandra Bandyopadhyay (?–1866), Baladev Palit (1835–1900), Rajkrishna Mukhopadhyay (1845–86) and others who finally turned towards older modes while trying to follow the English manners in poetry.

Birth of Modern Bengali Poetry

Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1824–73) is the first genuinely modern poet in Bengali. Right from the beginning of his career he was conscious of the originality of his poetry and while composing *Tilottamāsaṁbhav Kāvya* he wrote in a letter: 'I began the poem in a joke, and I see I have actually done something that ought to give our national poetry a good lift, at any rate, that will teach the future poets of Bengal to write in a strain very different from that of the man of Krishnagar [sic]—the father of a very vile school of poetry, though himself a man of elegant genius.' (24 April 1860). He was a Hindu College boy (1833–42), probably the best educated Bengali poet of the time, and during his term at Bishop's College in Calcutta (1844–47), after his conversion, he cultivated quite a few European languages as well. Had he been born some ten years earlier he probably would have been another member of the 'Young Bengal', an ultra-radical group with distinct elements of free-thought, but nobody knows if he would have turned into a poet. 'Young Bengal's' trusted mentor Derozio himself wrote some poetry, but hardly any of the other Derozians did. In place of Derozio, Madhusudan found Richardson as his teacher at Hindu College, another poet possibly more accomplished than Derozio. But his attempt to imitate Richardson and his vain bid to become a 'pucca sahib' (a perfect Englishman) created, for his poetic life, unnecessary complications. He composed English verses right from his childhood, and in 1849, while working in Madras, published his first volume *The Captive Ladie* in English. Composed in the manner of the historical romances of the English Romantics, the book flopped. Madhusudan probably realized his blunder, and soon changed to his mother tongue. The ten following years were spent in devising an original mode of poetry. *Tilottamāsaṁbhav Kāvya*, his first venture in Bengali, came out in 1860. A literary epic in *Meghnādbadh Kāvya* (1861), love-lyrics in *Vrajāṅganā Kāvya* (1861), heroic verse epistles in *Virāṅganā Kāvya* (1862), and sonnets in *Caturdaśpadī Kavitāvalī* (1866) followed soon after. *Tilottamāsaṁbhav* was welcomed as a grand literary monument ushering in a new epoch in literature. But from an English translation done by the poet himself (*Mookerjee's Magazine*, August 1874) modern readers may find the style rather affected and not so gainly:

Dhavala by name, a Peak
  On Himalay's kingly brow—
Swelling high into the heavens,
  Even robed in virgin snow;
And endu'd with soul divine;
  Vast and moveless like the Lord
Siva—mightiest of the gods,
  By holiest anchorites ador'd,—
When with spotless garment clad, he
  Stands sublime immers'd in pray'r,
With his arms uplifted high,
  His towering head in the air!

And while doing all this creative work he journeyed to Europe, was called to the Bar, became proficient in a few more European languages, and wrote some remarkable plays as well in Bengali. Back from Europe, Madhusudan hardly did any creative work. His poetic career was thus limited to a period of only six years.

The very few volumes published during this short period are memorable in the annals of Bengali literature not for their historical significance but for their unusual aesthetic excellence. Madhusudan first introduced the western modes of the epic, ode, heroic epistle and sonnet into Bengali. Bengali blank verse on the Miltonic model was also an added achievement. Madhusudan was thus the first Bengali poet who did consciously employ western modes in Bengali poetry, and owing to his genuine gifts most of his exercises achieved success.

But the ridiculous tendency to call Madhusudan 'Bengali Milton' had better be abandoned. When this poet started writing in the 19th century neither the language and poetic form nor the general readership was prepared for his original poetic practice. He on his part imitated western poetry all right but could not quite assimilate them. The glory of being the father of modern Bengali poetry certainly belongs

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to him, but mere originality can never be a poet's final vindication. This is the reason why he has not had much direct influence on Bengali poetry. His followers were not small in number, but most of them were examples of complete failure. Madhusudan's indirect influence was comparatively of far-reaching consequences, and that is where lies the significance of this rebel poet with his persistent experiments with Bengali verse.

Fervent Nationalism

Both Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay (1838–1903) and Nabinchandra Sen (1847–1909) had the ambition of writing like Madhusudan. Both had once achieved some name as writers of epics, and probably received more popular attention than Madhusudan himself who never wrote with an eye on popular taste. But Hemchandra's *Bṛtrasaṁhār Kāvya* (1875-77) partly in the blank verse of Madhusudan, on the noble sacrifice of Dadhichi and the destruction of Vṛtra, the demon, turned into an insipid and plain version of *Meghnādbadh Kāvya* as far as characterization and poetic technique were concerned, though the story had some epic dimensions. He had achieved similar limited success with his translations of Shakespeare's *Tempest* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Histories of literature may not forget to remind us of his other volumes like *Cintātaraṅgiṇī* (1861), *Vīrvāhu Kāvya* 1864), *Āśākānan* (1876) or *Daśmahāvidyā* (1882). This graduate of the newly established Calcutta University who had proudly declared, 'I have been handling the English language since childhood, and do not know Sanskrit', could not successfully integrate modern trends in his poetry. A natural inclination or talent for epic poetry was not there. Satirical verses like 'Bajimāt' or 'Never Never', one on the Prince of Wales' visit to a Bengali family, the other on the ill-famed Ilbert Bill, all based on topical subjects were his true achievements. These are highly readable even today, and became models for later poets like Satyendranath Datta. Apart from this the strain of patriotism also first became conspicuous in his poetry. Poems like 'Bhārat Saṅgīt', 'Bhārat vilāp' and 'Bhāratbhikṣā' were once on the lips of every Bengali. His shorter poems were collected in *Kavitāvalī* (1870) and *Cittavikāś* (1898).

Rhetoricians will fight on the eligibility of *Meghnādbadh Kāvya* as a true epic. The sources of the story is the Ramayana, but the poet cherished no fondness for 'Rama and his rabble'. His heart was with the Rākṣasa instead. The killing of its noble hero, therefore, cost him many a tear as he confessed. The grandeur of its lines translates very poorly as the following section from the scene of Meghnad's death will show:

> On earth and in the shades infernal down,
> In heavens,
> Immortals, mortals felt alike approach
> Of danger in dismay. Where on his throne
> Of gold in council sat the Rakshasa King,
> From head the golden diadem suddenly fell,
> Down came the turret of his car, as if,
> By hostile warrior out. In fear the King
> Of Lanka, in his mind, now Sankar called.
>
> (tr. Umesh Chandra Sen, 1907)

Each of the attributes of Eastern and Western epics may not be found there, and yet *Meghnādbadh* is great with its range and amplitude which constitute the true spirit of the epic. Other 'epics' written after Madhusudan are only lifeless imitations with all formal qualities of the genre. *Kaṁsavināś Kāvya* (1861) by Dinanath Dhar or *Nibātakabac Badh Kāvya* (1869) by Maheshchandra Sharma are examples. The temporary excitement of the Bengal 'Renaissance' was not perhaps conducive to the writing of epics. The very old lyric tradition may also have exerted a contrary pull. The newly born genre of the novel also came to pose a challenge.

Before Nabinchandra Sen started writing, the era of the Bengali epic had already ended, if it had ever begun. His inclination or aptitude was not also suited to the composition of epics. He started with lyrics, and the 22 poems of *Abakāśrañjinī* (1871) are not really bad. A tendency to soliloquize, frequent recourse to melodrama, and a carelessness in the use of diction and metrics are already visible there. Nabinchandra was still another graduate of Calcutta University and later served as Deputy Magistrate. *Palāśir Yuddha* (The Battle of Plassey, 1876), a historical narrative in the Byronic vein, became most popular among his books. A fervent patriotism expressed in his poetry *a la* Rangalal and Hemchandra, also helped him earn an immediate reputation. The lyric strain notwithstanding, he mainly wrote narrative poetry which was less artificial than the works of some of his predecessors. He had fairly assimilated the narrative vein of the English Romantics in his *Cleopatra* (1877) and *Raṅgamatī* (1880). *Raivatak* (1887), *Kurukṣetra* (1893) and *Prabhās* (1896), a trilogy based on the legend of Sri Krishna in the Mahabharata and *Bhāgavata* were his most ambitious work. They closely followed the Hindu revival in Bengal towards the end of the century, and may have been inspired by Bankimchandra's *Kṛṣṇacaritra* (1886) though the attitudes of these authors differed considerably. Bankimchandra himself had warned the younger author: 'You have planned a new Mahabharat indeed....If executed adequately, many will probably consider it as the Mahabharat of the 19th century —while others will take it to be a parody of the Mahabharat and I must assure you that an inadequate execution is likely to bring it down to the latter level' (*Essays and Letters*). The plan was ambitious, but it failed as poetry. Nabinchandra could not give it an epic form. When later in life he treated in verse the noble lives of Christ (*Khṛsta*,

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1891), Buddha (*Amitābha*, 1895) and Chaitanya (*Amṛtābha*, 1909), his poetic power had already been exhausted.

The Pre-Romantics. Akshaychandra Choudhury (1850–98) did not waste his time on the epic form and started with romantic narrative poetry. *Udāsinī* (1874) is distinguished by its lyric perception and spontaneous expression though it shows some influence of Thomas Parnell's *The Hermit*, which is an 18th-century oriental tale in heroic couplets. *Mālatī-Mādhav*, based on Pope's *Eloisa to Abelard*, also demands some attention. Akshaychandra exerted some impact on Rabindranath's juvenilia. Writers in this vein include Ishanchandra Bandyopadhyay (1856–97), Rajkrishna Roy (1849–98) and Anandachandra Mitra (1854–1903). *Aśvāyaner Kavitāvalī* (1886–87) by Rajkrishna is partly a translation of Macpherson's *Ossian*, while *Helenā Kāvya* by Anandachandra is a treatment of the story of *Iliad a la* Hemchandra.

Satires. Iswarchandra's satirical poems continued to be imitated through the second half of the century. The social satires of Hemchandra lack force and bitterness. *Chucundarībadh Kāvya* by Jagadbandhu Bhadra (1842–1906) is only entertaining as a parody of *Meghnādbadh Kāvya*. Proper satirical verse came first to be written by Indranath Bandyopadhyay (1849–1911) in the last quarter of the century. Even today his *Bhārat Uddhār* (1878) remains delightful to read.

Allegorical Poetry. The development is unbroken from Rangalal to Nabin, or from Iswarchandra to Indranath. To place Dwijendranath Tagore (1840–1926), Rabindranath's elder brother, in this tradition is difficult. Narrative poetry was not his forte nor was he bent on writing proper lyrics. With all his uncommon sense of humour he also avoided writing pure satires. *Svapnaprayāṇ* (1875), a 'glorious palace of allegory' to Rabindranath, is an island apart from the mainland of Bengali poetry, and is not quite a regular allegorical poem either. Like the Prince of the fairy-tales, its hero—the poet himself—goes out looking for his Muse. The work blends in it the real with the fanciful, the serious with the frivolous, metaphysics and poetry. Here indeed was a poet with a fine lyric temperament who could not avoid the lure of the narrative.

Bengali Romanticism

Biharilal Chakrabarty (1835–98) overcame that lure, and wrote genuinely modern lyrics to reveal himself in a voice of his own. He did not have any formal English education, attended only Sanskrit College, for some three years, and was not curious about western literature. And yet a pure Bengali lyrical style came to be established by him as if in response to the fake epics and narrative poetry contrived on western models by conceited Bengali poets having the benefit of the English education. An indigenous lyric tradition had of course never disappeared from Bengal, only of late the literature had become excessively extrovert. As an intensely subjective poet Biharilal turned instead to himself, which all lyric poets do. Moreover, he had a romantic temperament with a mystical bent of mind. The old fashioned readers found him rather obscure for this reason, and though Rabindranath admired him, public acknowledgement came much later. His supreme work is *Sāradāmaṅgal* (1879) and its complementary volume *Sādher Āsan* (published first in 1889–90 in a magazine)—poetic meditations on Sāradā, 'swan of my soul, my bliss', and on the poet's complex romance with her. Call it the romantic yearning for the far away, or the soul's awakening in a mystic poet, sincerity and ardour is unmistakable all through the poem. Rabindranath has pointed out the affinity between Sarada and Shelley's 'Spirit of Beauty', Brajendranath Seal pushed the resemblance further and observed that *Sāradāmaṅgal*, which may be described as a Bengali version of a phantasmagory that should combine the two visions Alastor and Epipsychidion in one, actually 'revels in an intoxication of emotional transfiguration' (*New Essays in Criticism*). Biharilal's other volumes include *Saṅgītśatak* (1862), *Baṅgasundarī* (1870), *Nisargasandarśan* (1870), *Bandhubiyog* (1870) and *Premprabāhinī* (1870).

Followers of Biharilal. Biharilal did not exert any immediate popular appeal, but his impact on the younger poets was deep and of far-reaching significance. Surendranath Majumdar (1838–78), known for his volume called *Mahilā*, reminds one of the mood of Biharilal's *Baṅgasundarī*. For lyric poems in the true romantic vein one has to go to Debendranath Sen (1858–1920). Unlike Biharilal he was not so untutored, and was a modern romantic poet with English education, closer to Rabindranath. His theme is love, mainly married love, confined to the narrow limits of family life. Intensely felt sensual qualities reduce all experiences to the earthly. His Nature poems, particularly on flowers, are charming. This love for flowers has been reflected in also the titles of his volumes: *Phulabālā* (1880), *Aśokguccha* (1900), *Golāpguccha* (1912), *Pārijātguccha* (1912) and *Sefālīguccha* (1912). After Madhusudan, he was also the greatest writer of sonnets.

More dissimilar than similar were the two contemporary poets Gobindachandra Das (1855–1918) and Akshaykumar Baral (1860–1919), Gobindachandra showing some little correspondence with Debendranath. Love is also the principal theme of Gobindachandra, and that love was quite sensual, at times totally physical as in this well-known poem:

I love every bit of her flesh and bone.
In that woman's beauty

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In that heap of flesh
In those sportive waters of loving desire
In that mud and slush and filth and shame
I happily swirl like the serpent Kālīya. (tr.)

Prem O phul (1888), *Kumkum* (1892), *Kastūri* (1895), *Candan* (1896) and *Phularenu* (1896) are among his chief works. In contrast, Akshaykumar Baral was a poet of ideas with whom even married love becomes the purveyor of trancendental thoughts. On his wife's death Gobindrachandra wrote *Kumkum*. Similar occasion produced *Eṣā* (1912) by Akshaykumar. Thus probably was launched the elegiac trend in Bengali poetry. Sentiments are under control in Akshaykumar though a sadness is pervasive. Impact of early Rabindranth is not difficult to notice in his work.

English education directly or indirectly prompted women poets to write poetry in the second half of the 19th century. History demands inclusion of some of these poets: Prasannamayee Devi (1857–1939), Girindramohini Datta (1858–1924), Swarnakumari Ghosal (1855–1932) and Kamini Ray (1864–1933).

The age of Rabindranath was round the corner with *Mānasī* already published in 1890. His earlier volumes published since 1878 demonstrate his link with the 19th-century lyric tradition in Bengali as also his distinctive personal style. Madhusudan, Biharilal and Rabindranath were near contemporaries. The rapidity of the transformation that they caused to Bengali literature was singularly remarkable.

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Bengali
Phase II: Tagore and After

AMIYA DEV

Rabindranath Tagore

Bengali poetry owes its present prestige to Rabindranath Tagore (Anglicized from Ṭhākur); if it were not for him, for his rhythmic experiments and widening of the vocabulary, his discovery of new rhymes and newer metaphors, of a variety of styles to fit a variety of modes, Bengali poetry would not have graduated to its present modernity where it can communicate a fairly complex urban experience with a fairly uncommon ease. More than in the novel and short story, more than in drama, in discursive prose and the personal essay, more than in any other genre that he took under his aegis, in poetry he made his truly historic contribution to the Bengali letters. Yet in the third quarter of the last century Bengali poetry was not doing very badly by the prevalent Indian standards: there was at least one master who had achieved a worthy masterpiece (*Meghanādbadh Kāvya* was published in 1861, the year Tagore was born), and although Hemchandra Bandyopadhyay and Nabinchandra Sen were imitators of Michael Madhusudan Dutt and turned out routine epics without a touch of his genius, they also had an immediate acclaim. Then there was Biharilal Chakrabarty who was trying a different mode. So Tagore did not step on barren grounds, rather he began as a novice but one destined to outshine his superiors absolutely overwhelmingly. When his first book of poems *Sandhyāsaṅgīt* (Evening Songs) came out in 1882, there was not a big splash though the discerning recognized his genius straightaway.

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Self, God and Man. About fifty books containing well over three thousand poems of the widest range—from nonsense verse and two-line epigrams to the most sublime utterances in the language—and of the most diverse modes, the most public as well as the most private, came from his pen; such prolificacy and versatility are indeed rare, even in world literary history, the only parallel that comes to one's mind is that of the German Goethe. And like Goethe he also kept on growing. His early poetry was mainly marked with an intensity of feeling from which he partly sought release in Nature and humanity. At some point God entered and took away all his attention—that was his middle poetry, in form the most supple. Some of these lyrics were set to music (by Tagore himself) and today we take them for songs. But after this the form took a turn; Tagore began experiments with the uneven *akṣarvṛtta* (the traditional metre where the closed and open syllables tend to have the same value) which had been in use in the theatre because of its proximity to speech rhythms and had its origin in Madhusudan's *amitrākṣar* (blank verse). There were other formal experiments as well in this late stage, the prose poem for instance. Did he also try free verse? These were probably necessary for his new subject-matter which we can broadly call 'man', as the early one could be called 'self'. Not that there were no connections: was it not inevitable that Tagore's 'God' should lead to 'man', or how distant was 'God' from 'self'—in other words, did not most romantic poetry carry a mystic core?

To see some 'romanticism' (in the European sense) in Tagore's early poetry is not critical anarchy, for Tagore *was* exposed to European 'romantic' poetry. And as in the case of the European romantics, there was no dearth of criticism against his excessive concern with the self and the supposed obscurity of language. Tagore was not doing any 'coenesthesia', but there was some conscious transposition which scandalized the all-too-plastic imagination of the day. Perhaps the critics felt that he did not have enough 'objective correlative', but since he was writing a new idiom, his figures were not a mere variation on the classical ones. However, he did show some indifference to the concrete, in later life he reacted rather unsympathetically to the French Baudelaire, whom he called a 'furniture poet'. He assigned sublimity to poetry; a dictum that inspired him greatly was Keats's 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty', which he rearranged into 'truth is beauty, beauty truth' reminiscent of the traditional Indian *satyam śivam sundaram*. With this aesthetic the result was unlike anything written by his immediate predecessors, unlike in fact anything this side of Vaishnava poetry. Who could think of a book like *Mānasī* (Intellectual Beauty) in 1890, rich in rhythms and texture, in themes and tones varied, and containing some romantic poems par excellence? There was a sense of 'je ne sais quoi' in it and a nostalgia for the long-ago and the far-away. Tagore had been writing in this general mood since his first book, true *Prabhātsaṅgīt* (Morning Songs, 1883) was an initial shift from *Sandhyāsaṅgīt* or *Chabi O Gān* (Pictures and Songs, 1884) and *Kaḍi O Komal* (Flats and Sharps, 1886) an attempted exteriorization of feeling, but in spite of an occasional self-rhetoric what predominated in these books was the above 'romanticism'. The main theme was love that could never be fulfilled. 'Futile tears/Futile this fire-filled desire, boundless.' Poem after poem of this, the hard way, or poem after poem of the soft: 'Who went by my soul, touching it up/Like a spring breeze?'

Mānasī was Tagore's true graduation: he discovered a new metre, the supple *mātrāvṛtta* where closed syllables are counted two and open syllables one. The next two books, *Sonār Tarī* (The Golden Boat, 1894) and *Citrā* (The Many-Splendoured Beauty, 1896) contain a few of Tagore's best poems. The title poem of the former and the last one, 'Niruddeś Jātrā' (An Aimless Voyage), build up a quite romantic boat image. The emphasis is still on the self, but the 'you' or the 'she' is getting to be a little generalized—the beloved seems to be taking the shape of the woman at the helm, inspiration, gradually growing into his 'Jivandevatā' (lord of life). And between this 'lord' and the God of his middle poetry there might have been a continuity, interestingly his persona also has been changing from the craving male to the yielding female—the line between the two is rather blurred, as the line between his love-songs and devotional songs is not very sharp either.

Seven levels have been located in Tagore's poetry, and some of the poems in some of the subsequent books—*Kathā* (Tales, 1899), *Kāhinī* (Stories, 1900), *Kalpanā* (Fancy, 1900) and *Kṣaṇikā* (The Passing One, 1900), for instance—are of the lower levels. Sometimes they are episodes taken from the annals of Indian history, sometimes just versified tales, a whole cluster is again humorous though of a slightly lower level. But there are also poems which are of higher levels—'Svapna' (A Dream) for instance, a romantic variation on Kalidasa's *Meghadūta*. This multiplicity is in general true; along with his 'god' poems he wrote sundry poems like *Utsarga* (Dedication, 1914) or poems in memory of his dead wife (*Smaraṇ*, 1914). And even among the 'God' poems where the inspiration is perhaps the most sustained, are pieces which are mere routine or just rhetoric.

Beyond Romanticism. If Tagore began in part like a European romantic he went beyond it in his middle poetry, as Goethe or Hugo or Wordsworth ever did attain such thirst for God—this was the poetry that brought him international fame (he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913 for the English *Gitanjali* gathered together from what he called his 'foreign reincarnations' of poems from various books of this period) and moved such western poets as Yeats and Pound to ecstasies. It was indeed an overwhelming reception, almost a phenomenon inexplicable in pure

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literary terms. The whole thing looked a bit unfortunate for Tagore, for in the first place he did not intend his translations as exact equivalents of the originals, nor did he make a bid for international fame. It could be that he was later partly forced by circumstances to put on those borrowed plumes but he knew that his prime responsibility was to his own language.

The 'God' cycle began with *Naivedya* (Offerings, 1901) but found perfection in *Kheyā* (Crossings, 1906), *Gītānjali* (Song Offerings, 1910), *Gītimālya* (A Garland of Songs, 1914) and *Gītāli* (Songs, 1914). The theme is devotion and love. The imagery is simple, sometimes reminiscent of Vaishnava poetry. In the straight devotional poems, most of the *Naivedya* for instance, there is utter submission and hardly any need for metaphor. But there are metaphors in the poems where God is an experience, taken as they are from the simplest forms of nature. Not everything is an experience of fulfilment, there is waiting too, there is even a sense of pain, but never doubt or dread. At times God is a wayfarer, who walks by when all doors are shut, or a king who comes unannounced at the dead of night, or a prince who rides past in a chariot crushing under its wheels a young girl's necklace offering, or a bridegroom whose tenderness for his young bride is unbounded. The great majority of the poems are technically flawless—supple in rhythm, in rhymes rich, in vocabulary simple but unmistakable, sonally smooth with a lot of cadence. If poetry is the absolute union of sense and sound, then they are the highest specimens of poetry; if poetry is the communication of experience, then also are they the highest specimens.

Affirmation of Life. Whether or not they were also the highest point of Tagore's poetic career is however an open question; some think they were, others think they were not. In any case there was going to be a shift from 'God' to 'man'. 'Self' also would surface now and then which had been a steady bass in the middle poetry. The first book of this cycle was *Balākā* (The Flying Swans, 1916). The underlying theme seems to be flux—a sense of motion in nature, in history, in biography—probably not alien to Bergson's 'creative evolution'. Along with this there is a general affirmation of 'life' quite significant considering Tagore's age, fifty-four. Death first emerged in *Pūrabī* (Evening Melody; 1925) dedicated to Victoria Ocampo, his host in Argentina in 1924, but emerged as a complement to life—in fact his second series of love-poems had its beginnings here. These are not so full of fire as the first series around *Mānasī*, but there is a new depth in them. The next major book *Mahuā* (Mahua is the name of a tree that flowers in spring and produces a strong wine, 1929) has a bright tone and is a celebration of life and love, but even here there is a feeling that things are running out (Tagore was sixty-eight). This duality of 'death' and 'life' would stay through the next decade, in *Pariśeṣ* (End, 1932), *Bīthikā* (Tree-lined, 1935), *Senjuti* (Evening Lamp, 1938), *Nabajātak* (Newborn, 1940) and *Sānāi* (The Plaintive Pipe, 1940). And he would look more and more closely at the earth, at things, at ordinary humanity. Contemporary events too would cast their shadows on them.

Quite a bit of the late poetry is remarkable for formal experiments. Besides the uneven *akṣarvṛtta* begun in *Balākā*, the *svaravṛtta* or the syllabic metre, whose value he had discovered earlier in *Kṣaṇikā*, was used unevenly to tell verse-tales in *Palātakā* (The Runaway, 1918). Later in *Punaśca* (In Addition, 1932) he began the prose-poem, already attempted unacknowledgedly in *Lipikā* (Writings, 1922), which was continued in *Śeṣsaptak* (The Last Octave, 1935), *Patraputṭ* (A Cup of Leaf, 1936) and *Śyāmalī* (The Dark Beauty, 1936). The uneven *akṣarvṛtta* was also given, after more experiments in *Ākāśpradīp* (The Sky-Lamp, 1939), a final trimming in the last books. In addition to all this Tagore wrote some nonsense verse and nursery rhymes: *Khāpchāḍā* (Nonsense, 1937), *Chaḍār Chabi* (Illustrated Rhymes, 1937) and *Chaḍā* (Rhymes, 1941), which should perhaps be grouped with the earlier children's poems *Śiśu* (The Child, 1909) and *Śiśu Bholānāth* (The Child God, 1922).

Towards Starkness. So he went on renewing himself even up to the year of his death. But at the same time there was an urge towards starkness; in *Rogśajjāy* (On the Sickbed, 1940), *Ārogya* (Convalescence, 1941), *Janmadine* (On My Birthday, 1941) and *Śeṣlekhā* (The Last Writings, posthumously, 1941) it was no longer an effusive affirmation of life, but a stark realization that life was tough. The human spirit has to triumph over that toughness. One of the last poems is about the 'superman', and the very last, the one written only a few days before his death, is a simple celebration of 'truth'. There is also the much-quoted 'By Rūpnārain I woke up/And realized/That this life was not a dream....' Thus Tagore's 'God' finally found a total identification with 'man', and Tagore's 'self' attained its full 'manhood'.

Tagore-inspired Poets

There are great poets who work out their own destiny, but there are also great poets who work out the destiny of their language, and Tagore was a great poet of the second kind. He had, no doubt, to face a lot of criticism from the old guards at various phases, but he also won a lot of adulation especially from the younger writers. Wave after wave of imitators appeared, but few attained much individuality. Of those who did the most important was Satyendranath Datta (1882–1922).

Satyendranath Datta. Satyendranath's forte was rhythm. Not only did he try Tagore's *mātrāvṛtta* in various measures,

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but made an attempt to adapt some Sanskrit metres to Bengali, such as the *Mandākrāntā*, a formidable task considering that Bengali does not have long and short syllables as such. He may not have much by way of a poetic vision, but as a 'wizard' of the Bengali rhythm, next perhaps only to the maestro, he has exerted an influence on the successive generations (the famous nonsense poet Sukumar Ray's experiments with rhythm may be indebted to him). Some of his titles are *Beṇu O Bīṇā* (Pipe and Strings, 1906), *Kuhu O Kekā* (Kuhu and Keka—birds, 1912), *Abhra-Ābīr* (Cloud-Dusts; 1916) and *Hasantikā* (In Jest, 1917), a bunch of very able satiric poems mostly in defence of Tagore against his orthodox critics. Satyendranath is also remarkable for his translations—three of his total fourteen are books of translation—and they are from various languages including French and German, Persian and some rare Indian languages; he even translated such Indian poets into English as Derozio, Toru Dutt and Aurobindo. Tagore too had done translations but not so extensively; it was really with Satyen Datta that translation became a major preoccupation of the Bengali poet; in the course of the succeeding decades we have translations of Hafiz, Omar Khayyam, *Meghadūta*, 19th-century French poetry, Heine, Shakespeare's sonnets, Eliot and so on.

Rural Inspiration. The other Tagore-inspired poets of Satyen Datta's generation include Dvijendranarayan Bagchi (1873–1927), Karunanidhan Bandyopadhyay (1877–1955), Jatindramohan Bagchi (1878–1948), Kumudranjan Mallik (1883–1970) and Kalidas Roy (1889–1975). They had occasional influence of one or two of Tagore's contemporaries as well, especially Debendranath Sen. The general key is gentle. Karunanidhan's main subject, for instance, is bhakti; even his titles reflect his mildness, *Prasādī* (Consecrated, 1904) or *Śāntijal* (Holy Water, 1913) or *Rabīndra-Ārati* (Tagore-Worship, 1937). Perhaps as a poet Jatin Bagchi was the best of this batch, his speciality was picturesqueness—with a few touches he could reproduce a rural landscape. Interestingly his first and second titles are *Lekhā* (Writing, 1906) and *Rekhā* (Lines, 1910). But if Jatin Bagchi had a painter's eye for the village, Kumud Mallik had a lover's heart—of all his contemporaries his reed pipe was the most tireless. Most of his eleven titles are of rural association; *Banatulsī* (Wild Tulsi, a household herb in villages considered sacred, 1911) for instance, or *Banamallikā* (Wild Mallika-flower, 1918), or *Ajay* (a river, 1927). Kalidas Roy too had a dominantly rural inspiration; the first three of his titles are *Kunda* (flower, 1908), *Kisalay* (In Bud, 1911) and *Parnaput* (The Leaf-Cup, 1914).

There were others about this time who were equally or more Tagore-inspired, deserving a place in anthologies: Priyambada Debi (1871–1935) for instance, author of *Reṇu* (Flower-Dusts, 1900), or Pramathanath Roy Choudhury (1872–1949), or Tagore's niece Hemlata Debi (1873–1967) and nephew Balendranath Tagore (1870–99). Even Chittaranjan Das (1870–1925), who was to later patronize an anti-Tagore camp as the editor of *Nārāyaṇ* (1915), wrote his poetry mainly under Tagore's influence (this was before he turned to politics). His first book *Mālañca* (The Orchard, 1896) was probably one of the earliest examples of the kind. He published four other books of which *Sāgarsaṅgīt* (Ocean Song; 1913) is best known. It may not be out of place to mention here that Tagore's two junior contemporaries in songs, Rajanikanta Sen (1865–1910) and Atulprasad Sen (1871–1934), both began as poets.

Of the formal imitations of Tagore, one was the sonnet in the manner of his cycle in *Caitālī* (Wild Spring, 1896). A junior contemporary, Pramatha Chaudhuri (1868–1946), who had married his niece Indira and exerted an influence on him by pleading the cause of the colloquial style, tried to revitalize the sonnet by giving it a French-Italian touch: *Saneṭ Pañcāśat* (Fifty Sonnets, 1913) and *Padacāra* (Footfalls, 1919) were products of that effort. But though he had a keen sense of style he was not much of a poet, his talent lay elsewhere (the essay). However, by starting the celebrated magazine *Sabuj Patra* (1914) he fostered literary controversies which helped poetry polarize into a pro-Tagore and an anti-Tagore camp. Eventually this would lead to the question of the future: was poetry going to stay absolutely Tagore-like? Satyen Datta's generation did not find an answer to this, or rather was not fully aware of the question. There were individual degrees of success and failure, but history was not set on wheels. (In fact the one poet who was changing was Tagore himself, but he was changing within his own orbit.)

Attempts to Outgrow Tagore

Mohitlal Majumdar. Was Mohitlal Majumdar (1888–1952) going to do that? Surely he tried to outgrow his early adulation of Tagore, but that perhaps was a bit too sudden. Even then it meant an independence. There was an insistence in his poetry on the body as opposed to the seeming bodilessness in Tagore's. In *Svapan-Pasārī* (The Dream-Vendor, 1922), in *Bismaraṇī* (Oblivion, 1927) he tried to minimize Tagore's influence by going back to Madhusudan and borrowing from Satyen Datta. His other books were *Smaragaral* (Love-Sore, 1936), *Hemanta Godhūli* (Autumn Twilight, 1941), a half of which was translation, and *Chatur-Caturdaśī* (Fourteen Rhythmic Variations, 1951). He made an impact on the poets who were finally going to claim the future, maybe not as extensively as Satyen Datta but on his cult of the body—the poets who grew up around the celebrated magazine *Kallol* (1923) and its companions *Kāli-Kalam* (1926) and *Pragati* (1927).

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New Notes in Poetry

Jatindranath Sengupta. Mohitlal's contemporary Kirandhan Chattopadhyay (1887–1931), author of *Nūtan Khātā* (New Notebook, 1923), also struck a new note in a minor way, gently lyrical, mainly through Debendranath Sen's influence. But Jatindranath Sengupta (1887–1954), the 'engineer poet', made a more substantial contribution. He wrote in a pessimistic vein with some social awareness. That there was not much to be happy about in this world was reflected in his very titles: *Marīcikā* (Mirage, 1923) or *Marumāyā* (Mirage, 1930) or *Sāyam* (Evening, 1940). But what saved him from sham was a mild satiric tone. Perhaps it was Jatin Sengupta's pessimism that set him apart from Jatin Bagchi, Kumud Mallik and Karunanidhan, and lent him some affinity with the new styles.

Nazrul Islam. But one who had a closer affinity, closer than Mohitlal as well, was Kaji Nazrul Islam (1899–1977) who came to be known as the 'rebel poet' because of his celebrated poem 'Vidrohī' (The Rebel). Tagore dedicated to him his musical drama *Vasanta* (Spring, 1923), he symbolized the spirit of spring in every respect. Rhythmic and sprightly, his poems contain a lot of rhetoric, in which a generous use of the Arabic and Persian vocabulary in conjunction with the Sanskrit, came quite handy. Next to Satyen Datta or perhaps more than him, he was a poet to be read aloud. His second book and first hit *Agnibīṇā* (Fiery Strings, 1922) took all by storm; almost overnight he became a public voice. There was such political and social appeal in him that he came under the wrath of the then foreign government. But undaunted he went on registering his protest, book after book, *Biṣer Bānśī* (The Poison Flute, 1924), *Bhāṅgār Gān* (The Song of Destruction, 1924), *Phanimansā* (Cactus, 1924), *Sarvahārā* (The Proletariat, 1926), *Jinjir* (Chains, 1928). Not only was he an inspiring poet with a mass appeal (like Tagore's patriotic songs, Nazrul's rousing lyrics were used on many occasions), he was also a very fine composer of songs. His collection of songs is considerable, some even feel that as a poet he made more contribution thereby expressing a deeper sensibility. Next to Tagore's, Rajanikanta's and Atulprasad's, Nazrul's songs are considered classic now.

Nazrul translated the *Rubayyat-y-Hafiz* (1930). Two other contemporaries translated from Persian, Omar Khayyam: Kantichandra Ghosh (1886–1948) and Narendra Dev (1888–1971). The latter also translated *Meghadūta*. There were some other poets who began publishing in the twenties. Jasim Uddin (1903–76) tried to write rural poetry in an authentic rural style, which was part of a revival of interest in folk styles begun by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his collection *Maimansiṅha Gītikā* (Eastern Bengali Ballads, 1923). Jasim Uddin made his name with *Nakśikānthār Māṭh* (The Field Like a Patterned Quilt, 1929), and followed up with such titles as *Rākhālī* (The Pastoral, 1930) and *Dhānkhet* (Paddyfields, 1932). (He died in Bangladesh where a separate tradition of poetry has been built up since the partition.) Pramathanath Bishi (b. 1901) also began in the twenties; two of his titles are *Vasantasenā* (1927) and *Vidyāsundar* (Vidya and Sundar, 1935). Radharani Debi (b. 1904) wrote both in her own name and in the pseudonym of Aparajita Debi: her own books included *Sinthimaur* (the bride's jewel at the parting of hair, 1932) and *Banabihagī* (The Wild Bird, 1937), and Aparajita Debi's *Buker Bīṇā* (The Heart Strings, 1930) and *Bicitrarūpiṇī* (The Versatile Beauty, 1937). But the poets beginning in the late twenties and early thirties and bringing about a real change of style, were those who started their career in *Kallol* and its companions.

Tagore and the Moderns

The new poetry was a bit too revolutionary for the orthodox, the spiritual descendants of the 'moralists' who had earlier objected to Tagore, and there was a real furore in which the lead was taken by the literary weekly *Śanibārer Ciṭhi* (Saturday Post). A number of swords were crossed including Dilipkumar Roy's (1897–1980), who championed the *enfants terribles* (ironically his father, the famous poet Dvijendralal Roy, 1863–1913, had been of the anti-Tagore camp), and the issue was finally taken to Tagore. Tagore sympathized with the so-called 'ultra-moderns' though without endorsing all their violations of literary taboos—in fact in an essay 'Ādhunik Kāvya' (Modern Poetry, 1932) he showed an ambivalence to modern poetry. He was not sure whether it had a total view of life; besides, was every experience worthy of poetry, all metaphors sublime? Yet he knew that modern poetry had come to stay.

Foreign Influences. The 'moderns' explored new areas of experience including the physical and the mundane and the merely social. There was an approach to the purely urban and in aesthetic values too there was an extension: some 'ugliness' (the French 'mal') was admitted. The rhythm turned to be more flexible, more and more of uneven *akṣarvṛtta*, free verse and prose—the last was gradually freed of its sense of inferiority. Generally more defiance, more crispness, avoidance of the obviously poetical, banter, and occasional bathos were seen. There was some foreign influence, mostly of the Anglo-American school of Eliot and Pound, and at times of the French symbolists, especially of Mallarmé. Verbal abandon was balanced by verbal terseness, leading to an 'oblique' style which sometimes demanded an effort from the reader. If we place such similes as 'Coughing like an old ram, a car goes past,/Spewing jittery petrol' or 'In a wind dry like peanuts', beside 'Silent like the night, you/Came hiding

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from all eyes' or 'Like a dream do not go past/Pushing me aside in indifference', we can see how far this poetry had moved away from Tagore. True Tagore came as far as: 'The umbrella looks like the salary/After deductions,/Too many holes' or 'This lane is a terrible lie,/Insufferable, like a drunk's blabber', but there was perhaps more wit here than authentic experience.

The Kallol Group

The new poetry acquired its characteristics in the course of a decade or so and through the concerted effort of a number of poets, not all of whom bore the same banner or maintained the same allegiance. *Kallol*'s Achintyakumar Sengupta (1904–76) later made a name as a writer of fiction but he also began as a poet. His first book *Amābasyā* (New Moon) came out in the same year as Buddhadeva Bose's *Bandīr Bandanā* (The Prayer of the Prisoner) and Ajit Datta's *Kusumer Mās* (The Month the Flowers Bloom, 1930). *Āmrā* (Us, 1933) and *Priyā O Pṛthivī* (The Beloved and the World, 1936) followed, but Achintyakumar did not achieve much beyond a few anthology pieces.

Premendra Mitra. His ambidextrous contemporary Premendra Mitra (b. 1904) fared better. *Prathamā* (The Maiden One, 1932) established him as a poet of unusual power and with a full voice. One of the strains he produced, perhaps the most predominant, was 'democratic': a proclamation of the poet as a priest of the underdog—'I am the poet of the turners, smiths and carpenters,/The poet of the coolies and the workers/And all mean creatures.' *Samrāṭ* (Emperor), came out in 1940 which also had a broad sweep and love of humanity: in his expansiveness he might remind us of Nazrul and, more perhaps, the American Whitman whom he would later translate—*Huiṭmyāner Kavitā* (Poems from Whitman, 1955). In the meantime Premendra Mitra had collaborated with Buddhadeva Bose in bringing out a quarterly solely devoted to poetry, the celebrated *Kavitā* (Poetry, 1935). His third and fourth books were *Pherārī Phauj* (The Absconding Army, 1948) and *Sāgar theke Pherā* (Return from the Ocean, 1956), the latter being his most popular book. *Harin Citā Cil* (Deer Panther Curlew) a subsequent book, came out in 1959. Ajitkumar Datta (1907–79) who jointly edited *Pragati* with Buddhadeva Bose began as a very sensitive poet, on a low and lyrical key. In his *Kusumer Mās* he created his 'mānasī' *Mālatī*, a gentle 'Venus'. His second book *Pātālkanyā* (The Girl from the Deep) came after an interval of eight years, and the third *Naṣṭacānd* (The Tainted Moon) also, a bit late, in 1945. The fourth and the fifth followed soon, *Punarṇavā* (Rejuvenated, 1946) and *Cāyār Ālpanā* (Patterns Made by Shadows, 1951), but Ajit Datta who had written some of the best sonnets of his generation, did not quite fully develop his gifts. *Jānālā* (Windows, 1959) and *Sādā Megh Kālo Pāhāḍ* (White Clouds and the Black Mountain, 1970), however, revealed a thoughtful world. He is also known for his nursery rhymes. Another good starter, though not of Ajit Datta's eminence, was Hemchandra Bagchi (b. 1904), a *Kallol* poet whose first book *Dīpānvitā* (A Festival of Lights) came out as early as 1928. Perhaps his best book is *Gītiguccha* (A Sheaf of Songs, 1936), a cluster of prose poems and sensitive images, after which he had a mental breakdown. Another *Kallol* poet was Manish Ghatak (1901–80), author of *Śilālipi* (A Stone Inscription, 1939), better known for his fiction under the pseudonym Jubanashva. One should mention Shibram Chakravarty (b. 1905) too, famous writer of juvenile stories, who began as a poet in *Kallol* and published *Mānuṣ* (Man) and *Cumban* (Kiss) in 1929, both collections of rather remarkable poems. Another ambidextrous writer, not of the *Kallol* group though, is Anandasankar Ray (b. 1904) whose early poetry included *Rākhī* (a knot for friends, 1929) and *Vasanta* (Spring, 1932) but whose reputation as a poet now rests on his nonsense verse.

Poets of the Thirties

Jibanananda Das. Of the five major poets of this generation (which has come to be known as the generation of the thirties) the oldest and the first to die was Jibanananda Das (1899–1954), in many ways the greatest Bengali poet after Tagore. Of all five he was the least influenced by Tagore: the two post-Tagore similes quoted above (cf. Foreign Influences) are from him. In his first book *Jharā Pālak* (Fallen Fibrils, 1927) there may be more influence of Satyen Datta than Tagore. Tagore called his poetry 'imagist', but that is not the whole point, nor is it one of the half-a-dozen other adjectives and phrases used about him. He is one of those rare poets who have a total sense of poetry, who do not use language mainly to communicate feelings or thoughts but to grasp reality. Perhaps he was trying to hit upon a language that would sustain experience. He once said that the true poetic act was to make similes; in this sense he is the purest poet of his generation, for it is in his similes and metaphors that a great many of his perceptions lie. There is no 'history' as such in him. The same is true of his treatment of nature. Everything in him is turned into experience—he has little rhetoric. All this makes Jibanananda the most obscure poet of his generation—from his second book onwards he often needs a peeling. However, his books are not absolutely chronological—that is, they do not reveal a stage-by-stage development of his poetic personality. The second *Dhūṣar Pāṇḍulipi's* (The Greying Manuscript, 1936) poems were written between 1925 and 1929, the third *Banalatā Sen's* (1st ed. 1942, enlarged 2nd ed., 1952) poems between 1925 and 1939, the fourth

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Mahāpṛthivī's (The Great World, 1944) between 1929 and 1941, and the fifth *Sāt-ṭi Tārār Timir's* (The Darkness of the Seven Stars, 1948) between 1928 and 1943. Besides, the posthumously published *Belā Abelā Kālbelā* (Time, Wrong Time, the End of Time, 1961) contains poems written between 1934 and 1950. There is another posthumous book, though not planned by Jibanananda himself, *Rūpasī Bāṅlā* (Beautiful Bengal, 1957) containing unpublished (discarded?) poems written during the last phase of the *Dhū ṣar Pāṇḍulipi* period. This partial contemporaneity of his poems also seems to reveal an obsessive quality. Occasionally he used words almost like a maniac, thrashing them and beating them. Here is an excerpt: 'Now I wonder: where are you tonight?/Why does beauty—that beauty of earthly woman—/never know the star-shadowed deodari sland?/ Being handled by flabby hands, being handled—handled—handled—/fondled—handled—/ O water, wind, and fire! the crude gods burst into laughter:/ Being handled—fondled—handled, does it turn into the flesh of swine?' (tr.). 'All are not poets, some are' is the beginning of an essay by him, which shows what he meant by poetry—not just a highly concentrated use of language pleasing to the ear but more, a thrust of the consciousness in search of perception. One is sometimes reminded of Blake which may not be an unfair comparison for either.

Sudhindranath Datta. Of the five the second to die, Sudhindranath Datta (1901–60), was in many ways Jibanananda's antipodes. He began with Tagore's blessings and his first book *Tanvī* (The Lissom Beauty, 1930) was dedicated to Tagore. However, from his second book he asserted his individuality fully; not only did he write a new kind of experience but evolved a new style and a new poetic idiom. *Orchestra* (1935) contained some of the most memorable love poems of his generation: love was necessarily intense here-but also necessarily impermanent, in other words he attained a dialectic which was going to stay with him as the prime characteristic of his style. The third book *Krandasī* (The Heavens, 1937) was more probing, more full of doubt and despair as revealed in the following lines: 'The essence of life is to be fed to the ghouls, /To bear unflinching and unprotesting/Corpses' company and the good will of jackals' (tr.). *Uttarphālgunī* (the name of a star, 1940) looked a lesser book: the main theme was love, but a later love. Sudhindranath was a very fastidious writer; and whether or not for his fastidiousness alone, his pen almost stopped flowing after the thirties and his next book *Samvarta* (Cyclone) came out in 1953. The war was its prime theme and its title poem, in some ways Sudhindranath's greatest, was a personal reminiscence put in the historical perspective. Here he gave a further shape to his dialectic and saw a kind of law in events by which 'truth/And falsehood, good and evil, ugliness/And beauty are reciprocally linked' (tr.). There was another long poem in this book by the name of 'Yayāti', a rhythmic marvel considering the various ways it used the 18-syllable *akṣarvṛtta* and a synoptic piece where he summed up his position. This he would more distinctly spell out in his next and last book *Daśamī* (Ten Poems, 1956) as the Buddhist *kṣaṇavād* (the view that only instants are true) and nihilism. In 1955 Sudhindranath had brought out a book of verse translations, *Pratidhvani* (Echoes), done over the years from English, French and German, including Shakespeare, Mallarmé and Heine. Mallarmé was acclaimed as his poetic ideal, and the result was a general terseness which was one of Sudhindranath's contributions to Bengali poetry. His other contribution was bringing poetry close to prose by interweaving argument with emotion and imagery.

Poetry Movements

Jibanananda was not involved in any group and although Sudhindranath founded the famous review *Paricay* (1931), he did not lead any movement in poetry; but there was one who felt most urgently about the kind of poetry his generation was writing—this was Buddhadeva Bose (1908–74). He was one of the earliest to recognize Jibanananda and saw as much poetry in Amiya Chakrabarty as in Sudhindranath or Bishnu Dey. He was perhaps the leader of 'modern' poetry —in fact as *Kavitā*'s editor for 25 years or so he introduced a long line of poets including his near contemporary Samar Sen and his successors over two decades such as Subhash Mukhopadhyay and Shakti Chattopadhyay.

Buddhadeva Bose. Buddhadeva's *Bandīr Bandanā* became one of the main targets of the anti-'moderns'. Obviously they got him wrong, for far from being a piling of lurid details the book was an anguished cry of the spirit imprisoned in the body—'a heavenly child under ban' was its leading motif. And perhaps matching this was his facility for writing, which produced book after book of poems: *Ekṭi Kathā* (One Word, 1932), *Pṛthivīr Pathe* (On the Way to the World, 1933), *Kankāvatī* (1937), his second major book mostly containing love-poems, *Natun Pātā* (New Leaf, 1940) reflected marriage. Two booklets later, suppressed, *Ek Paisāi Ekṭi* (Poems a Paisa Each, 1942) and *22 Śrāvaṇ* (the date of Tagore's death, 1942), showed a temporary social awareness which must have been the effect of the War and the anti-fascist movement. His third major book was *Damayantī* (1943) in an appendix to which he printed a credo for the modern poet, somewhat like the imagist manifesto, subsequently suppressed. The book contained a first attempt at terseness and a first awareness of things outside self: 'Byāng' (Frogs) or 'Ilish' (Hilsa fish) for instance. *Rupāntar* (Change, 1944) and *Draupadīr Śaḍī* (Draupadi's Saree, 1948) maintained this. But *Śīter Prārthanā: Vasanter Uttar* (Winter Prays: Spring Answers, 1955) coming after a few years of silence contained clearer

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signs of a new style. It was at this time that he was doing most of his translations from Baudelaire; with whom he must have felt an affinity. *Je Āndhār Ālor Adhik* (The Darkness That is More Than Light, 1958) finally ushered in the new style. These were short poems—some of the more memorable ones were sonnets—technically flawless and in vocabulary 'classicist' as opposed to his early 'romanticism'. A poem that almost became a theme poem, began with 'The personal alone is holy'. He published more variations on this in *Marce-paḍā Pereker Gān* (Song of the Rusty Peg, 1968). In 1971 he published a batch of prose poems, *Ekdin: Ciradin* (One Day: Every Day), near epiphanies. Buddhadeva's last book *Svāgata Vidāy O Anyānya Kavitā* (Welcome Parting and Other Poems, 1971) marked the final phase of his development where he regained his facility again but not to release emotion as in the early poetry, but perception as in Rilke's case whom he had been translating (published in book form in 1970). His Baudelaire translations (published in book form in 1961) had become a classic by then and so had another, a translation of Kalidasa's *Meghadūta* (1957). In the meantime he had done Hölderlin (1967). He also did bits from other poets including Śankarācārya and Pasternak. A versatile genius he also wrote nursery rhymes. Modern Bengali poetry owes another thing to Buddhadeva Bose; he translated quite a bit of it into English for non-Bengali audiences.

Marxism and Bengali Poetry: First Phase

Bishnu Dey. Modern Bengali poetry owes a lot to Bishnu Dey as well. The youngest born (1909) of the five, he began rather sure of himself writing in a style unlike Tagore's, yet using him along with other traditions in the manner of Eliot and Pound. *Urbaśī O Artemis* (1933) pleased his brothers-in-trade for its preoccupations with self and libido and for its urbanity. His second book *Corābāli* (Quicksands, 1937) was more mature and confirmed his uniqueness in his unpredictable vocabulary and, more, his wide-ranging allusions. But from his third book began his search for a new style which would free him from his tortuous preoccupations with self. *Pūrbalekha* (Foreword, 1941), cast in part in the perspective of the war, showed his unrest especially in 'Padadhvani' (Footfalls: on Arjuna's failure at the end of the Mausala Parvan) and 'Janmāṣṭamī' (on Krishna). *Sāt Bhāi Campā* (The Seven Brothers Champak, 1945, enlarged from *22nd June*, 1942) was an immediate product of the anti-fascist movement. And *Sandvīper Car* (The Sandvip Island, 1947) showed that poetry must look for a larger area of experience, in the peasant movement for example, in folk, and necessarily evolve a simpler expression. This search had evidently led him to Marxism and in *Anviṣṭa* (The Goal, 1950) he seemed to have finally found his idiom as seen in a piece often anthologized, 'Jal Dāo' (Water My Roots). He had not given up his early model, Eliot (in 1953 he was to publish the Eliot translations in book form), but he had discovered other and more relevant affinities: Aragon and Eluard in particular. But *Anviṣṭa* also began a search into the exact nature of the modern poet's commitment. Did it mean toeing the party line in every respect? The question had an immediate historical point, for around this time the Communist Party of India went into an extremist phase. Bishnu Dey's connection with *Parichay* (which Sudhindranath had sold to the party a few years ago) was severed and he started *Sāhityapatra* (1948). *Anviṣṭa* found its fulfilment in *Nāme Rekhechi Komal Gāndhār* (I Call it Komal and Gandhar, two discordant musical notes, 1953), his happiest work. There was a harmony here between experience and expression; *Ālekhya* (Sketches) and *Tumi Śudhu Panciśe Baiśākh* (You Alone Are 25 Baishakh, Tagore's birthday), both published in 1958, maintained that ease in unadorned presentations of everyday reality and ordinary heroes, but a new phase seemed to be beginning with *Smṛti Sattā Bhaviṣyat* (Memory, Being, Future, 1963), in occasional doubt and melancholy. 'Into the petals of day and night's red flowers' had been the beginning of a villanelle written in the previous phase, or 'Fear no more the dark,/Cover your face with my hands' had been another beginning; but now in the sixties and seventies there rose a film of darkness which however could not cover all light. *Sei Andhakār Cāi* (We Want That Other Darkness, 1966) was one answer the other darkness being that of creativity, and *Uttare Thāko Mauna* (Keep Quite in Answer, 1977) the other. The next five books, *Saṁvād Mūlatā Kāvya* (News which is Poetry, 1969), *Itihāse Trāgic Ullāse* (In History's Tragic Gaiety, 1970), *Rabikarojjal Nijadeśe* (In My Own Land Bright with Sunshine, 1973), *Iśāvāsya Divāniśi* (Days and Nights by Absolute Covered, 1974), and *Citrarūp Matta Pṛthivīr* (The Image of the Crazed World, 1975)—are all evidence of his unquiet and his faith. Perhaps his faith is also seen in his translations of the period, from Ho Chi Minh for instance or from African poetry. That his own poetry had something to do with his translations had been proved earlier too: Eluard and Aragon and Lorca and many others including some Soviet poets. Along with Sudhindranath Datta and Buddhadeva Bose, Bishnu Dey has been a major translator of his generation.

New Poetry of Faith

Amiya Chakrabarty. Buddhadeva Bose revived the *Ādhunik Bāṅlā Kavitā* (Modern Bengali Poetry), an anthology originally edited (1940) by Abu Sayeed Ayyub and Hirendranath Mukhopadhyay. Bishnu Dey too has edited a similar anthology: *Ekāler Kavitā* (Poetry of This Age, 1963). But unlike them, Amiya Chakrabarty (b. 1908)

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seemed uninvolved with such leadership; but not like Jibanananda who was far too engrossed in his own perceptions; uninvolved partly perhaps because he has always been something of a wanderer. Besides he has had other interests: Tagore, Gandhi, Schweitzer for instance. Also he started late; born in the same year as Sudhindranath, he brought out his first book *Khaśḍā* (First Drafts) in 1938. However, it was unique in its smart images and fitting rhythm, crisp and often uneven beats giving a hint of free verse. *Ek Muṭho* (A Handful, 1939) was in the same vein, smarter, more urbane, more crisp, but without much 'view of life' except in one poem, 'Dark is this Noon as it Rains on the Soil of my Heart'. The mosaiced landscape was international which would stay so as one of the hallmarks of Amiya Chakrabarty's poetry. This mosaic seemed to reveal an attitude in the slender *Māṭir Deyāl* (Earth Wall, 1942). *Abhijñānavasanta* (Spring Signs, 1943) showed more and included one of his most memorable poems: 'Saṁgati' (Harmony). In the next, *Dūrayānī* (Travelling Far, 1944), there was still more—its last poem, in spite of its mundane humour, projected a humanist portrait of God. By now Amiya Chakrabarty had perfected his rhythm, mostly a verse-oriented rhymed prose unique for its suppleness (an approximation to Hopkins's 'sprung rhythm'?). His next book *Pārāpār* (Crossings and Recrossings, 1953) included some first-rate poems—for instance: 'Make rice, rice will crop, this soil in a world of dust', or 'Binimay' (Instead), or 'Vast the forest, giant the trees/Once you are out, all gone'. Amiya Chakrabarty is a poet of affirmation, with a sense of 'still centre', but underneath there is a continuous restlessness, an endless hopping from place to place, feeling at home on the remote Pacific as well as in the depths of Bengal. *Pālābadal* (Change of Scene, 1955) also had this duality; written both away and at home, these sundry portrayals were some kind of a wanderer's 'night-songs'. But this eventually led to *Ghare-Pherār Din* (Time to Come Home, 1961)—no, not nostalgia nor digging up a buried self, simply a sense of involvement. For some-time now he had been trying a kind of narrative and to fit that his language had been getting simpler (a mode comparable to Tagore's *Palātakā*): we have some such poems here, the wanderer's testament as he moved from land to land. *Hārāno Arkid* (Lost Orchids, 1966) had more and a few dialogues in addition. *Puṣpita Imej* (Images in Bloom, 1967) was a small book of love poems, and *Amarāvatī* (Heaven, 1972) recaptured a bit of his earlier humour ('Carrots in one hand, in the other the Bomb'). The most recent *Anihśeṣ* (The Inexhaustible, 1975) is further evidence of his concern with humanity. He may seem close to Bishnu Dey though without his Marxism; but it is probably with Tagore that he has a closer affinity. No doubt he has written a kind of poetry different from the master's—in fact he graduated to a poet by moving away from him, but on his own route he has gradually come back to the master.

More Poets of the Thirties

Thus the five major poets of the thirties represent a variety of relations to Tagore, on one end Amiya Chakrabarty, the most like him, on the other Jibanananda, the most unlike. But these five did not exhaust all the possibilities of post-Tagore modern Bengali poetry, nor did those others either mentioned above. There were still others. Humayun Kabir (1906–69), Bimalaprasad Mukhopadhyay (b. 1906), Sunilchandra Sarkar (b. 1907) might not have developed but wrote some good pieces, each in a more or less distinct style. So did Ashokbijay Raha (b. 1910) and Jyotirindra Maitra (1910–77), themselves very dissimilar. Nishikanta Roy Choudhury (1909-73) made a splash with some poems, especially a fairly long piece on Pondicherry. Bimalchandra Ghosh (b. 1910), who has had a longer poetic career, also attained popularity with a few poems. However, Sanjay Bhattacharya (1909–69) and Arun Mitra (b. 1909) claim a lot more attention. Sanjay Bhattacharya's dedication to poetry was exemplary; not only did he bring out the magazine *Pūrbāśā* in the early thirties to take the place, as it were, of *Kallol*, but he was one of the first few to recognize Jibanananda's genius. His own poetry included *Sāgar O Anyānya Kavitā* (Ocean and Other Poems, 1936), *Pṛthivī* (The World, 1939), *Jaubanottar* (Past the Prime of Life, 1941), *Prem O Aprem* (Love and Lack of Love, 1953): he was equally deft in handling verse and the prose-poem. But Arun Mitra's main achievement has been the latter and in that he has done some unique experiments. A rhythmic prose reminiscent of Tagore's *Lipikā* and Rimbaud's *Illuminations*, inspired perhaps by the French contemporaries like Eluard, is what we see in a book like *Utser Dike* (Towards the Sources, 1957) or the later *Ghaniṣṭha Tāp* (Intimate Warmth, 1963) or the more recent *Śudhu Rāter Śabda Nay* (Not the Night's Sounds Alone, 1978). Arun Mitra is a Marxist, but his Marxism is unlike that of many others', gentle and tolerant. Of the poets born in the second decade mention should be made first of Dinesh Das (b. 1913), the 'kaste poet' who created a stir with his poem 'Kāste' (The Sickle, 1937: 'The moon today is the sickle') which inspired two elders, Sudhindranath Datta and Bishnu Dey, to write a poem each on the same theme, and some younger poets to take their cue from them. His first book, *Kavitā 1343–48* (Poems, 1936-41, 1942), which included this poem, attracted attention, but whether he has lived up to that promise is often doubted. Some claim that *Ahalyā* (1954) is his best book showing sure development. Mrinalkanti Das (known now as Paramananda Saraswati, b. 1915) has written in a different vein, mostly spiritual, but Chanchalkumar Chattopadhyay (b. 1914) has written an essentially similar socially aware poetry, though more oblique and more allusive. A few others around that time are Sushil Roy (b. 1915), Bishva Bandyopadhyay (b. 1916), Kamakshiprasad Chattopadhyay

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(1917–76), Haraprasad Mitra (b. 1917), Kiranshankar Sengupta (b. 1918) and Manindra Roy (b. 1919), of whom Kamakshiprasad perhaps attained the greatest degree of individuality with *Maināk* (a mythical mountain, 1940). But of all the poets born in the second decade the two most important in the real sense are Samar Sen and Subhash Mukhopadhyay.

Marxism and Bengali Poetry: Second Phase

Buddhadeva Bose wrote in 1940: 'Ten years ago I was the youngest poet in Bengali. But after the publication of *Urvaśī O Artemis* that honour was enjoyed by Bishnu Dey, until Samar Sen appeared with his *Kayekṭi Kavitā*. Recently Samar Sen too has lost that coveted place; the youngest poet in Bengali now is Subhash Mukhopadhyay.'

Samar Sen. Samar Sen's (b. 1916) *Kayekṭi Kavitā* (Some Poems) appeared in 1937 and Subhash Mukhopadhyay's *Padātik* (On Foot) in 1940, and both marked a new beginning in Bengali poetry, the true advent of Marxism. Samar Sen's Marxism was mostly reflected in his keen unsentimental analysis of the urban middle class for which he probably chose the fittest medium—the prose-poem, one most unlike Tagore's. In some ways he emerged as the first fully urban poet depicting a lot of urban complexity and ugliness which coincided with the fact that he was one of the first to be free of any direct influence of Tagore. Tagore's Urvasi had already changed in the hands of Bishnu Dey, and now:

> Will you come to our faded life
> Urbashi, wearied,
> as fertile women come with sad faces
> to the Chittaranjan Maternity Ward.

Or

> A faded day has dawned on the great city,
> then a night like tar
> and how many red sarees and soft breasts,
> and well-groomed men
> and the sniff of how many goldflakes in the air. (tr.)

Samar Sen brought out three other books *Grahaṇ O Anyānya Kavitā* (Eclipse and Other Poems, 1940), *Nānākathā* (Sundry Rumours, 1942) and *Tinpuruṣ* (Three Generations, 1944), and then gave up poetry. One must admire his courage and honesty considering that poets once established, rarely give up writing.

Subhash Mukhopadhyay. Subhash Mukhopadhyay (b. 1919) began in a similar vein, urban and analytical with a lot of banter, only he was more committed. Neither Bishnu Dey nor Samar Sen had his able combination of 'lyricism and sloganism'. There is another thing he did in first poems—a contribution to the Bengali rhythm in his consonance with the Bengali speech rhythm: a flexibility in the *akṣarvṛtta* taking advantage of the ambiguous value of the closed syllables in it. This caught on almost immediately and developed further in the fifties. Subhash Mukhopadhyay's next books *Agnikoṇ* (Blazing Corners, 1948) and *Cirkut* (Scraps, 1950) carried more commitment dealing with the war and after: some of the 'progressive' poems here were perhaps a product of the Communist extremism, the same that made Bishnu Dey withdraw a little. A change came over him as well—he gave up his banter and turned to prose, unique for its short measure. *Phul Phuṭuk* (Flowers Bloom or Not, 1957) was the first book of this kind, followed by *Jata Dūrei Jāi* (However Far I Go, 1962) and *Kāl Madhumās* (It is Springtime, 1966). His more recent books are *Ei Bhāi* (Brother, 1971), *Chele Geche Bane* (The Sons are in Exile, 1972) and *Ekṭu Pā Cāliye, Bhāi* (Brother, a Bit Faster, 1979) where the core experience is the decade's political change-overs. He has also translated: from the Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet, from Neruda and extractsfrom others.

With Subhash Mukhopadhyay began the so-called forties and a good many followed, both politically committed and apolitical. The former grouped mainly around *Paricay*, a Marxist magazine now, and although *Kavitā* was much more catholic, the latter found *Paricay* more congenial. Mangalacharan Chattopadhyay (b. 1921), known for his *Meghbriṣṭijhaḍ* (Clouds and Rains and Storms, 1951), combined commitment with lyricism. One important background of his—and Mriganka Roy's (b.1925)—poetry was the Bengal peasant movement called 'Tebhāgā' (the third share), another was Telengana. Mangalacharan has not written much though he began with promise. Golam Kuddus (b.1920) took a lead in the late forties and early fifties and reflected most the extremism. Jagannath Chakraborty (b. 1924), Satindranath Maitra (b. 1925), Ram Basu (b. 1925) and Krishna Dhar (b. 1926) have a gentleness about them and Pramod Mukhopadhyay (b. 1927) an urbanity. But the youngest of this generation, Siddheshwar Sen (b.1928) has perhaps written more significant poetry. One characteristic of these poets, most of them at least, is their lack of violence on the language. But not in Birendra Chattopadhyay, the oldest (b.1920) and maybe the most important. He has had a considerable development and in his recent poetry the language fits the experience fully. He has also written some straight protest or propaganda.

Sukanta Bhattacharya. The forties also produced Sukanta Bhattacharya (1926–47), perhaps the most popular Bengali poet after Tagore and Nazrul. His death from tuberculosis at so young an age created a stir for he left his promise

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unfulfilled. But *Chāḍpatra* (Passport), *Ghum Nel* (Sleepless) and *Pūrvābhās* (Premonitions), all three posthumous, do show a lot of power. He was a young communist who practised his faith and whose poetry was born of his faith. So the simplicity is fitting, and the rhetoric is that of faith. But besides rhetoric and emotion, he has some images too that reveal his historical consciousness. The chick and the matchstick and the staircase become his underdog, long oppressed but about to rise and flare up. The kite is a symbol of the oppressor to end up lying dead on the footpath. There is repeated mention of rationing, queues, food, a subject rather 'prosaic'. In the kingdom of hunger there cannot be any 'poetry' and this is voiced in so many words in a short piece that has two memorable lines for conclusion:

The full moon mocks this hungry earth
Like a scorched, inedible *chapati*.

It is obvious that Sukanta did not attain any technical innovations: he wrote conventional verse as well as the prose-poem, some instances of which are quite 'imagist'.

Poets of the Forties with no Left Commitment

'Apolitical' is not a good criterion, for nothing probably is ultimately apolitical, it is simply to denote those poets of the forties who did not have a left commitment. Of them, Arunkumar Sarkar (1922-80) published two books, *Dūrer Akāś* (Faraway Skies, 1952), *Jāo Uttarer Hāoā* (Go, Northwind, 1965) and a few stray poems. Naresh Guha (b.1924) too has two books so far, *Duranta Dupur* (Magic Afternoons, 1951) and *Tātārsamudra-Ghera* (Surrounded by Tartar Sea, 1976). Both are remarkable for their lyricism: Arun Sarkar's is one touched with an unsentimental melancholy, Naresh Guha's is one pleasant with a crisp irony. Love and nostalgia seem to be Arun Sarkar's main concerns; what saves him from the obvious and makes him a notable poet in spite of his thin output, is his gentleness of tone. In some of his poems he attains a rare Verlainesque quality. Naresh Guha's crispness has done him a different kind of credit. He plays upon the emotions rather than simply evoke them and the result is an effable urbanity. Nirendranath Chakrabarty (b.1924) has written more than Arun Sarkar and Naresh Guha and has perhaps mastered the craft better. *Nīlnirjan* (The Vacant Blue, 1954) established him as a very able poet and his subsequent books *Andhaker Bārāndā* (Dark Balcony, 1961), *Nīrakta Karabī* (Bloodless Karabi—flower, 1965), *Nakṣatra Jayer Janya* (For Claiming the Stars, 1969), *Kalkātār Jīśu* (Calcutta's Jesus, 1969), *Ulaṅga Rājā* (The Naked Prince, 1971) and so on, have not only borne out that reputation but enhanced it considerably. He has attained such dexterity that it seems he can make a poem out of anything. Besides these there is also Ramendrakumar Acharya Choudhury, though technically not of the forties because he began to publish later, but one born in the same decade (1922). He has written little, only one book so far, *Arśinagar* (The Mirror Town, 1961), but very distinct. While it is neither rhetoric nor emotion, it seems to approximate perception —in fact he is about the only one of his generation who seems to have something of Jibanananda's quality. Two more born in the twenties (also better considered as poets of the fifties) are Rajlakshmi Debi (b. 1927), Lokenath Bhattacharya and Arabinda Guha (b. 1928).

The Fifties and After

The fifties could also be seen in terms of commitment and non-commitment, but there were other attainments and other polarities as well. The poets continued to publish in *Kavitā* and *Paricay* and their like, but a need for new poetry magazines was felt. The foremost of them was *Kṛttibās* (1953) which provided a kind of aesthetic for the new poets who broke away from their predecessors. The forties had experimented with the *akṣarvṛtta* on a modest scale, they patterned it towards producing a verse that at times looked like prose thus bringing poetry closer to speech. One may read a violence here that reflected the times. Besides they claimed an affinity with Jibanananda and borrowed some of his 'obsessions'. The *Kṛttibās* poets were far too many to be listed here, but the two provided the lead: Sunil Gangopadhyay and Shakti Chattopadhyay (both b. 1933). Though they bore the same banner they are quite distinct from each another. But the more important poet of the fifties is Shankha Ghosh (b. 1932). His *Dinguli Rātguli* (Those Days Those Nights, 1956) was a bit expansive, but *Nihita Pātālchāyā* (The Indrawn Shadows of the Deep, 1967) looked inward and *Ādim Latāgulmamay* (Covered with Primaeval Weeds, 1967) maintained that inscaping. With *Mūrkha Baḍo, Sāmājik Nay* (Too Much a Fool, Not Socially Minded, 1974) he looked out again and confirmed his social awareness. The more recent *Bābarer Prārthanā* (Babar's Prayer, 1976) and *Tumi To Teman Gauri Nao* (You Are not that Fair, 1978) have proved that Shankha Ghosh has been writing about the social awareness of the individual. Unlike *Kṛttibās*, a parallel poetry magazine *Śatabhiṣā*, published poetry on a quieter level. One can go on adding names and quoting trends (Marxism, for example, has quite a few under its banner), but perhaps it is not yet time to close the history of the fifties. However, a poet who has done his generation credit is Benoy Majumdar (b. 1934). Most of what he has written is a bursting forth of perception: he is the truest successor of Jibanananda. Two more decades

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have passed, the sixties and seventies, and the list is enormous. There are so many trends, so many styles, so many manifestos—even to keep count of the little magazines that publish poetry exclusively, seems difficult. There were even a few issues of a 'poetry by the hour'. They are short-lived, and necessarily so, which means one makes room for another. Does it show anything specially Bengali bearing out that rather damaging comment that all Bengalis write some poetry in adolescence? Or does it simply mean that all contemporary scenes are blurred? Surely some of the trends, some of the styles, some individuals are already successful, surely some more are going to be so and in the event the sixties and seventies may not prove any less exciting than the fifties; but we must leave that to future historians. For the present let us merely record the excitements and claim them as part of the post-Tagore Bengali poetry in general. And repeat that the post-Tagore Bengali poetry is considerable and though it has not produced anyone of Tagore's stature—it perhaps cannot —it has done justice to his legacy.

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Gujarati

SURESH DALAL

The Modern Period in Gujarati literature begins with the death of Dayaram in 1852. He was the last great Gujarati poet who wrote in the vein of the medieval poets. The transition took place as a result of the influence of the British who had consolidated their power in India by the first quarter of the 19th century. They brought with them a new education and a new way of looking at things. Their political ideas led to newer ways of thinking about government, their social values led to the great social reforms in the 19th century and their ideas about the position of women led to thinking about women as individuals and partners in life. Love—subjective love in poetry—owes its entire existence to the influence of the British on India.

The first two great names that are associated with the beginning of the modern period are those of Kavi Dalpatram Dahyabhai (Kavi Dalpatrām Dahyābhāi, 1820–98) and Kavi Narmadashankar Lalshankar Dave (Kavi Narmadāśaṅkar Lālśaṅkar Dave, 1833–86)—popularly known as Narmad. It is true that modernity fully manifested itself in Narmad. But its beginning was first seen in Dalpatram. Even chronologically Dalpatram is earlier and as such is the pioneer of the modern age of Gujarati poetry.

Kavi Dalpatram Dahyabhai. Dalpatram has copious writings to his credit. He has written essays and dramas, given speeches, composed songs and *garbis* (lyrical song sung by men in a chorus while the women perform the *garbā* form of folk-dance), *padas* (a type of devotional song), poems, and verse in various styles and metres and *muktakās* (detached stanza) and *chappas* (six-line unit in medieval Gujarati poetry). His first poem *Bapani Pipar* (The Father's Peepul Tree) was written in 1845. Umedbhāi Maniar, in his book *The Influence of English on Gujarati Poetry* (1969, p. 39) aptly says 'this may be considered as an epoch-making little event in modern Gujarati poetry, for it was a literary innovation that did not easily fit in with anything done previously in verse. Though neither the representation nor the expression is faultless, the poem has the historical significance of being the first milestone in Dalpatram's journey in the realm of new poetry.' Since then he continued writing poems up to 1898, i.e. for about 53 years, not only in Gujarati but also in the *Vrajabhāṣa*, a variant of Hindi.

Dalpatram has given us two volumes of his poetic collections. These poems can be divided into two groups: (i) shorter poems and (ii) longer poems. The longer poems are patterned on the medieval type in form, and are mostly didactic in character. What attracts our attention is that in these longer poems of old poetic form Dalpatram has dealt with social and secular themes. His modernity of approach is seen in the selection of themes such as printing presses, fire brigades, railways, foreign travel, female education, tobacco, bugs, cobbler's stone, etc. It is this peculiar characteristic of Dalpatram that establishes him as a pioneer of modern Gujarati poetry.

The poems of Dalpatram are mostly objective, the only exception is the subjective poem *Forbes Viraha* (Separation of Forbes, 1865) paying tribute to Alexander Kinlock Forbes (1821–65), an important British officer who loved India. He was a great friend of Dalpatram and this poem became the first elegy in Gujarati and incidentally the best poem of Dalpatram. His satirical poems are quite characteristic of his poetic style. His way of expression is so pointed that it produces the desired effect as soon as the poem is read. The use of apt illustrations adds to the effect. Some of his lines have become quotable quotes. Dalpatram once remarked that erotic sentiment is a very fine sentiment in poetry, but it had its own pitfalls and therefore he did not write much in that vein. For him poetry was not a spontaneous expression and he seems to have written deliberately to create an impression on people. In order to entertain people he also resorted to the jugglery of words and fanciful tricks. People were so enamoured of his poetry that they gave him the title 'Kaviśwara'—a title originally given to him by Forbes. Though he was quite popular, Dalpatram did not possess much poetic genius. The very concept of poetry that he had was faulty. His style is overdescriptive, the poems create an impression of mere reporting with minor details. He went on expanding without any idea of propriety; as a result even the structure of his poem lost a sense of proportion.

Dalpatram enjoyed the advantages and the disadvantages of his times. By writing in a simple language full of detailed description at a time when there was no refined taste to appreciate poetry, he won the hearts of many. Variety and correctness of metres and the use of apt alliterations are some other significant traits.

Umedbhāi Maniar in his book *The Influence of English on Gujarati Poetry* (p. 45) says: 'Whatever his intrinsic prowess as a poet, his historical significance as the bridge between

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the old and the new Gujarati poetry, which established him as the first among those who wrote the English type of new Gujarati poetry, cannot be overlooked or underestimated.'

Narmad (1833–86). Narmad is unforgettable as the pioneer of modern Gujarati literature. He is the first one to be really benefited by the influence of English literature. His contact with western thought during the formative years made him the harbinger of modern spirit in Gujarati literature. He created a new climate in the literature of his times, which was mostly centred around knowledge, devotion and renunciation.

It was Narmad who gave a unique status to subjective poetry in Gujarati. Though Dalpatram and some of the medieval Gujarati poets like Narsimha, Mira and Akho had also written some poems which could be classed in this category, what distinguished Narmad from them was his earnest endeavour to depict only what he felt personally and intensely at a particular moment. Thus his poetry was invested simultaneously with spontaneity, subjectivity and intensity.

Narmad accepted nature as the receptacle of poetry. He described nature looking at it from a personal angle and giving his individual observations. Nature to Narmad was a solace which healed his wounds. It was also an avenue of escape from his own self. In a note to his poem *Vanavarṇana* (Description of Forest, 1862) he stated that he was so obsessed with the idea of human frailty that he could find no joy or relief in the company of men or books. He therefore rambled over distant and solitary spots and found considerable relief in the contemplation of nature. Once he remarked that Nature was his beloved to whom he resorted in order to forget the world (*Narmakavita*, p. 272). His poem on Mount Brahmagiri struck a new note and was the first specimen of a true Nature poem in the Gujarati language.

Narmad was the first Gujarati poet to write love poetry with an emphatically subjective approach. Before him, love-poems were written only with reference to Radha and Krishna since religion, devotion and divinity were indistinguishable in those times; poetry being no exception. But Narmad sang boldly of worldly love. He generally dealt with romantic fulfilment between man and woman though he preferred to depict the melancholy aspect of love. His treatment of love was superficial for he failed to fathom the depths of emotion. 'Love and Valour' was the motto of his life which is reflected in his writings.

His poems of patriotism and heroism are equally remarkable. In fact he himself was considered a great hero and patriot. One of his well-known poems beginning 'On, on! to battle; the bugles are blowing, Plunge headlong; Success awaits you,' depicts his spirit of revolution in unforgettable words. His poems on Surat are quite remarkable. 'Oh Surat, The Image of Gold, How Far You Have Come Down' (tr.) is one of the titles.

Vigour and intoxication are the very life-blood of Narmad's poetry. He had a feeling that poetry was produced from powerful enthusiasm—an impression which marred the beauty of his works. He had great enthusiasm to compose poems, but did not have the patience to chisel them.

Keshava Harshad Dhruv. Keshava Harshad Dhruv (1859–1937) enriched Gujarati literature not by his original works but by giving excellent translations of some of the Sanskrit classics like *Mudrārākṣasa*, *Vikramōrvaśīya*, *Gita Gōvinda*, *Amaruśataka*, dramas of Bhāsa and Harsha, etc. His contribution in the form of original editions of *Kādambari* by Bhalhana and *Anubhavabindu* by Akho is also noteworthy. By means of these translations of Sanskrit classics and the critical editions of some of the important old Gujarati works, he has linked two different eras that were separated.

Narsinhrao Bholanath Divatia. The change from the old to the new tradition gained further momentum with the publication of Narasinhrao's *Kusum Māla* (Garland of Flowers, 1887). Narasinhrao Bholanath Divatia (Narsiṁhrāo Bhōḷānāth Divaṭiā, 1859–1937) was a poet, critic and philologist of great repute. He was greatly influenced by English literature and so he tried to wean Gujarati poetry from its traditional mould on to the path of English poetry.

Narsinhrao has to his credit five volumes of verse published between 1887 and 1935: (1) *Kusum Māla* (1887); (2) *Hṛidayavīṇa* (The Lute of the Heart, 1896); (3) *Nūpur-jhankār* (The Jingle of Anklets, 1914); (4) *Smaraṇa Samhita* (The Book of Memory, 1915) and (5) *Buddhacarita* (The Life of Buddha, 1934). In these works he tried to handle a variety of forms such as songs, sonnets, *Khaṇḍakāvya* (lyrical poem based on a story), elegy, etc. In *Kusum Māla* there are lyrics which in theme, representation and style are mostly modelled on the English. There are a few poems on nature as well as on love wherein the poet deals with the ideal nature of love. In the second collection, viz. *Hṛidayavīṇa*, besides poems on nature and love there are a few poems which depict social problems such as the miserable life of young widows, etc. There are two *khaṇḍakāvyas* with their plots selected from Mahabharata.

Thereafter Narasinhrao had to suffer many losses, tragic shocks in his personal life. As a result there was a remarkable change in his attitude towards life and nature. Tragic sentiment became the prevailing mood of his poems.

The flowers are whithered
The strings of the lute are broken,
The bells of the anklets
no more jingle sweetly.
Only the sentiment of pathos remains,
Let the soil of my heart
be moistened by it for ever. (tr. J.H. Dave)

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He once described himself as a 'musical instrument which finds sad music more to its liking'. This pensive outlook, along with greater maturity in ideas, emotions and expressions are revealed to a great extent in his third collection, *Nūpur-jhankār*. The fourth collection, *Smaraṇa Samhita* is an elegy, of the English type, on the death of his young son. This is one of the more prominent compositions of Narsinhrao. It is definitely a step ahead of *Forbes Viraha* composed by Dalpatram. The last work *Buddhacarita* is a collection of all his poems on Buddha. Narsinhrao translated and also adapted into Gujarati a few portions of *Light of Asia* by Edwin Arnold. The translation lacks poetic excellence.

Narsinhrao pursued his poetic activity very sincerely throughout his life. He tried his hand at various forms of poetry. Most of his songs are set to the tune of the prevalent *Garbi* but they lack in spontaneity which is an indispensable feature for a song. At the same time Narsinhrao's pen has produced the song *Maṅgaḷa Mandir Khōlō* (Please Open Your Auspicious Temple, 1915) a song which the entire world of Gujarati poetry can be proud of. It has found a place in the hearts of scholars as well as laymen. The emotion here is expressed in such a haunting manner that its mere recitation would create a sublime atmosphere.

In the *khaṇḍakāvyas* attempted by Narsinhrao, propriety of form is not uniformly maintained. His hairsplitting attitude comes in the way of his success. In spite of this there are certain remarkable compositions like *Uttara ane Abhimanyu*, *Tadguṇa*, *Mahābhiniṣkramaṇa*, etc.

Narsinhrao was pre-eminently a poet of Nature. He was greatly influenced by the different aspects of Nature, viz. its beauty, majesty and grandeur, and he was the first Gujarati poet to write so extensively and systematically on it. Moreover, his treatment of nature was distinctly personal. He wrote on various objects of nature such as lakes, mountains, rivers, birds, flowers, sky, clouds, sun, moon, stars, morning, and evening. In fact he has not missed any object or aspect of it as nature was to him a link between man and God. But overdoing it has affected his poetic grace. In his love-poems, Narsinhrao emphasized the eternal nature of true love. He tried to define love in one of his poems where he described the Indian bird sārasa (swan) as the symbol of love.

Contradictory opinions prevail regarding the exact worth of Narsinhrao's contribution to Gujarati literature. When his poetry is reviewed in the historical perspective, in spite of its limitations, his achievement is by no means meagre.

Manishankar Ratnaji Bhatt. The next great name in the realm of Gujarati poetry is Manishankar Ratnaji Bhatt (Maṇiśaṅkar Ratnaji Bhaṭ; pseudonym Kānt; 1867–1923). He is a genuine poet who has also written plays, lucid letters, biographies, besides doing some translation. His fame, however, rests on his poems, especially the *khaṇḍakāvyas*. The actual number of *khaṇḍakāvyas* composed by him is only seven and all the seven are not of equal merit. *Vasant Vijay* (The Triumph of Spring, 1890), *Cakravāk Mithuna* (The Pair of Chakravaka Birds, 1890), *Devayāni* (1889) and *Atijñāna* (The Supersensory Knowledge, 1889) are the best. The artistic delineation of the plot in a natural setting gives the general form of the poems and the tender pathos of love is the inspiration. The poet intuitively uses metres which are suitable to the emotion depicted and thereby produces a variety of effects. On account of the deep influence of Sanskrit, his verses possess a special glow and maturity.

In his subjective love-poems his pen does not slip into sentimentalism, but presents feelings very effectively with consummate restraint. By the magic of words and their proper arrangement, Kant produces a sound effect which is in harmony with the emotions. The credit of bringing the metre *Añjani* from Marathi to Gujarati literature goes to him.

Amongst Kant's poems, the one entitled *Sāgar Ane Śaśi* (The Sea and the Moon, c. 1923) is a rare piece. It is a beautiful lyric where the serene mood of devotion blends with the feeling of wonder and thanksgiving evoked by the beauty of nature. Here is a rough rendering of a passage: 'The moon shines like the bright eye of God. The sea rises in tide, Night illumined by flashes of lightning moves slowly, the cuckoo pours forth its ecstasy of love and there is peace on Earth and in the heart.'

The word picture of the original is grand, and the sweet and serene music of the words linger in our ears for a long time.

Kant's influence pervades Gujarati poetry afterwards. It is a fact that the form of *khaṇḍakāvya*, though not much developed after Kant, was still in vogue.

Kant has a distant literary relationship with the poet Premanand whom Kant did not like. Like other poets of his time, Kant was also influenced by the style of Dalpat; but only for a short period. He successfully evolved his own independent style and left its imprint on the poetic literature of Gujarat. In him we find a rare and happy combination of an inspired poet and a skilled craftsman. And some of his lyrics will always be cherished by Gujaratis.

B. K. Thakore. B. K. Thakore (Ṭhākor, 1869–1952)—the poet and critic actually belongs to the Paṇḍit Yug (The Era of Scholars) though he was closely associated with the Gandhian and subsequent eras. He wrote dramas, novels and short stories, but is better known as a poet and critic.

Thakore has to his credit a collection of poems entitled *Bhankar* (Intimations, 1917) which constitute almost his entire poetic output. In Gujarati poetry two elements, namely, subjective lyricism and emotional expression, were given much importance before Thakore. According to Thakore this only restricted its horizon. He said that though emotion was an important constituent of poetry, one should differentiate between sentiment and sentimentalism; in his

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opinion thought-content was as important in the best kind of poetry. Thus he gave an altogether new direction to Gujarati poetry by writing reflective poems.

Thakore's second contribution to Gujarati poetry is that he experimented and provided a new metrical device in the form of the *Pṛithvi* metre which is something like the English blank verse. A number of Gujarati poets adopted this metre following Thakore and it continues to be popular.

Thirdly, the credit of giving a firm footing to the sonnet (the same word is used in Gujarati) in Gujarati poetry goes to Thakore. During his poetic career he wrote and translated a number of sonnets and in due course, the sonnet form became popular in Gujarati. Some of the later poets have considerably enriched the field by composing excellent sonnets. Some of Thakore's sonnets occupy a significant place in Gujarati literature.

Thakore has enough variety of subjects. He has written on God, nature, and love. He deals with both subjective as well as objective poems with the flashes of a genius. His poems appear to be obscure at first, but if read repeatedly and with proper understanding they are a source of great joy. Thakore is mainly regarded as the chief architect of change—in attitude, form and medium—that came over Gujarati literature after 1930.

Sursinhaji Takhtasinhaji Gohil—'Kalāpi'. Sursinhaji Takhtasinhaji Gohil (pseud. 'Kalāpi', 1874–1900) who has written so copiously at a very young age, is one of the most popular Gujarati poets. Transparent letters manifesting the subtlest emotions, interesting travelogues, are his contributions to prose, but in spite of these, Kalapi is remembered only as a poet and especially as a singer of love.

As regards love—the eternal feeling of the human heart—Kalapi wrote both subjective as well as objective poems. The germ of his poems is found to a great extent in the personal incidents of his life. He has been influenced by almost all of his contemporaries though he never lost his own originality. Like Narsinhrao he has also written pure nature poems, and perhaps more successfully than the former. Here is an example taken from *Phūl Vīṇa Sakhe* (1896):

Glean Flowers, My Friend!

Glean flowers, my friend! glean flowers!
The dawn is just breathing, my friend!
The bud that is blossoming now,
will soon vanish.
The bright rays of the sun
Are yet spreading out in the dome of the sky;

Delay is not desirable,
As time passes,
This sun will also sink and set,
All the flowers will bend their heads,
No fragrance will be there, then
Glean flowers, my friend! Glean flowers
The dawn is just breaking, my friend!

(tr. J. H. Dave)

Imitating Balashankar and Manilal, Kalapi wrote *ghazals* and imitating Kant he wrote *khaṇḍakāvyas*. In his enthusiasm to write a *mahākāvya* he wrote *Hamirji Gohel*, an unfinished poem (1897–98). The story element which does not attain an artistic proportion in the metrical form of his *khaṇḍakāvyas*, and the monotonous description of nature are drawbacks which have to be noted.

As regards the *ghazal* (a form of Urdu verse composition), he has often failed to maintain its structure. But Kalapi's characteristic features are very clearly seen in *ghazals*, as the impulse of emotion can be expressed easily in them. Besides the *ghazals* of personal love, Kalapi has composed *ghazals* where there are glimpses of Monism and Sufism very dear to Persian poetry from which this form descended into India.

More of sentimentalism than real sentiments, lack of precision in the use of words, constant use of expressions like Oh! and Alas! and much preaching are some of the weak points of Kalapi's poems. And unfortunately before his poetry could mature, he died at the young age of 26. Kalapi's sentimental thinking about life, death, love, beauty, pranks of fate, happiness, sorrow, hope and despair is woven into his poetry.

Nanalal. Nanalal (Nānālāl, 1887–1946) was a prolific writer who tried his hand at almost all the forms of poetry, viz. *bālkāvya* (poems for children), *mahākāvya* (epic poem), song, *rāsa* (poems which could be sung with dancing), and *khaṇḍakāvya*. From sophisticated metres he gradually turned towards blank verse. Basically Nanalal is a lyrical poet but like Kalapi his emotion does not turn into emotionalism. Most of his poems are in the form of spontaneous expressions, e.g.

O, the lethargy of my eyes!
They did not stare at Hari even for a while.
They did not fix themselves in an intent look even for a wink;
They did not please themselves
even by a glimpse of Him.

(from 'O The Lethargy of My Eyes', tr. M. M. Jhaveri)

The lyrics of Nanalal have been highly influenced by folk-songs. He made use of their tunes, their emotions, but they always manifested themselves as the voice of Nanalal

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Looking at the range of Nanalal's lyrics, a connoisseur would only react saying, 'Ā Kamalōni kuñjaman Hun bhuli paḍi' (I got lost in this bed of lotuses).

This spring has blossomed
with all its hundred petals;
Come, O, Hari.
The Earth has dressed herself
in her loveliest and best;
do please come O Hari!
(from 'This Spring has Blossomed', by Nanalal, tr. M. M. Jhaveri)

But Nanalal has his limitations as a lyrical poet. Many of these poems have a nice beginning but are not interesting to the end.

Nanalal became popular on account of the simplicity of language which he inherited from his father Dalpatram, who lacked imagination; but Nanalal had both. Unfortunately he did not have a sense of humour like his father. When he deals with the subject of man-woman relationship he is under an obsession. His moral vehemence occasionally results in unpoetic expressions.

Nanalal is a poet of creative fertility and being a master of words he uses them rather extravagantly. His greatness lies in the fact that his powerful poetic influence continued to pervade the subsequent generations. Poets like Umashanker Joshi and Balmukund Dave show a great deal of the influence of Nanalal. We also find glimpses of spiritual yearnings in his poems. The search for God, search for Brahman (The Supreme Being) provokes his conscience constantly. He is considered one of the greatest poets the Gujarati language has produced.

Minor Poets of the Pandit Yug. There are a number of minor poets who more or less imitated these poets and contributed their share to the development of modern Gujarati poetry. Sometimes a minor poet can produce a major poem, but generally they just echo the voice of the greater poets. Lalitji (1877–1946), A. F. Khabardar (Khabardār, 1882–1953), a Parsi by birth who wrote in classical Gujarati, and Botadkar (Boṭādkar, 1870–1924) are some of the minor poets of this age.

Ramnarayan Vishwanath Pathak. Ramnarayan Vishwanath Pathak (Rāmnārāyaṇ Viśvanāth Pāṭhak, 1887–1955) wrote poems first under the pen-name 'Jātṛālu' (the traveller) and then 'Śeṣ' (the remaining one). From the varied and valuable contribution he has made in the field of literature one can have an idea of his many-sided genius as a critic, poet, story-writer, essayist and a thinker. As 'Jātṛālu', he did not publish any book but as 'Śeṣ' he published *Śeṣman Kāvyo* (Poems of Śeṣ, 1938).

He has tried almost all the forms of poetry except the *mahākāvya*, and he was successful in all of them barring the *ghazal*. He has not written much from the point of view of quantity but whatever he has written is such that it would create an everlasting impression on the mind of the connoisseur. His very intimate association with the Sanskrit language and literature has provided his poetry with a kind of classical touch and grace. God, Nature and love are the three favourite subjects of his poems. Enough variety of subjects and forms is to be met with in his poems. We have a satirical poem like *Vaiśākhno Bapore* (The Afternoon of Summer) or a humorous poem like *Natwarlāljīno Garbo* (The Garba of Natwarlalji). Pathak also offers a prayer to God in another poem—'Kyāre Ā Āyakhun Khune' (When This Life is Over), wherein he asks for a life of fulfilment and heroism. His Nature poems are not merely descriptive; the pleasant as well as dreadful aspects of nature are depicted graphically in them.

As a result of the experience of love, both joy and sorrow are depicted in his poems. The despondency arising from disappointment in love mingles with the visionary's perception of that which lies beyond sorrow. In the poems of Pathak feelings are depicted with and highlighted by extraordinary restraint. There is a harmonious blending of emotion and intellect. His deep contemplation enables him to present a multidimensional view of the subject. Use of certain strange words and love of rhyme, which sometimes appears to be contrived, are some of his limitations as a poet. Pathak's poetic art is vigorous and lively on account of his erudition, command over metres, artistic use of the figures of speech, proper grasp of the form of poetry and healthy outlook on life.

While coming from the *Paṇḍit Yug* to the Gandhian era, we cannot forget Jhaverchand Meghani (1897–1947) who is well known as a national poet and Chandravadan C. Mehta (b. 1901) who has written poems on sisterly love. Gandhiji gave the title of national poet to Jhaverchand Meghani. His *Yuga Vandana* (Obeisance to the Age, 1935) is quite famous. So also are C.C. Mehta's *Ilā Kāvyo* (Ila Poems, 1933) which depict the love between brother and sister.

The Gandhian Era

From *Paṇḍit Yuga* to *Gandhi Yuga* is a short jump. The Gandhian era begins with the advent of Gandhiji on the scene of the Indian national movement by the middle of the second decade of the 20th century.

The factors that were responsible for the appellation *Gandhi Yuga*—the period from 1915 to 1947—were Gandhiji's insistence on a style of writing that would go straight to the heart of the reader, his immense love for the villages, his struggle for India's freedom in which many poets and literary men of the period actually participated, his concern

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for the downtrodden and his call for the uplift of women. With his advent literature got a mine of new subjects to write about and an entirely new style of writing evolved, quite different from the ornate Sanskritized forms of the *Paṇḍit Yuga*.

The two most eminent poets of the *Gandhi Yuga* are Tribhuvandas Luhar (Tṛibuvandās Luhar, pseud. 'Sundaram'; b. 1908) and Umashankar Joshi (Umāśaṅkar Jośi, b. 1911).

Sundaram and Umashankar. These two names are so very closely associated with each other that for a moment one may feel that they refer not to two different persons but to one person only. In fact in this connection the statement once made by Umashankar is quite correct: 'In 1944, at Baroda on the occasion of the formal institution of "Lekhakmilan", while introducing the writers, as regards Sundaram I said, "we are twins"' (*Kavīno Śabda*, ed. Suresh Dalal, 1968, pp. 237-38).

The poems of Sundaram have established relations with the spiritualism of Sri Aurobindo. In fact Umashankar and Sundaram were activated by strong spiritualism in writing poetry though they cherished different concepts of spiritualism. Both have served the word for the sake of art.

In the poetry of the post-Pandit era, *Kāvya-Maṅgala* (The Poetic Bliss, 1933), by Sundaram and *Gaṅgōtṛi* (1934) by Umashankar Joshi are important milestones. Their seething inner selves burst out into powerful and poignant words. Along with changing experience, the form of words also altered. At one time the poems of both these poets appeared to traverse the same path but by careful scrutiny it can be seen that the paths pursued by them were never the same, a fact established with reference to their own poems.

Excerpts from Sundaram's poems:

(i) 'I Will Be a Flower and Come to You'

I will be a flower and come to you
You, a child would be playing beneath a tree;
I will drop myself on your head—
and will drink the innocent curiosity in your eyes;
I will be a small toy in your hands and play
You may separate each petal and fling into the air
I will be a flower and come to you.
(quoted in *Tapōvan* by Suresh Dalal, 1969, p. 259)

(ii) 'Grant Me'

God, grant stars to my dark nights
and moon to the bright ones
and Sun to the lighted days
God, Grant flowers to my fragrance
trees to my forests
and bless the earth with its sky.
(from *Kavita, 1957–58–59*, p. 1, ed. Suresh Dalal; tr. J. H. Dave)

Excerpts from Umashankar's poems

(i) 'Let the Peaks Be Lofty'

I like the peaks
but let the valley full of the people's noise be mine!
Let the peaks be lofty
but let my stay be down on the earth.
(from *Samanvay*, p. 113, ed. Suresh Dalal, 1975; tr. J. H. Dave)

(ii) Oh! The Inner Fire Divine!
Envelop in your flames
The lethargy, drowsiness, sluggishness and
the great endless widely spread bushes of ego.
Let it blaze, burn it all
Miserliness and all the meanness of the mind.
(from *Abhijñā*, 1964; tr. J. H. Dave)

Among the important books of Umashankar Joshi mention may be made of *Gaṅgōtṛi* (1934), *Niśītha* (The God of Night, 1939), *Vasant Varṣa* (The Spring and the Rainy Season, 1954) and *Pṛācīna* (The Ancient One, 1944). As for Sundaram *Kāvyamaṅgaḷa* (1933), *Vasudhā* (The Earth, 1939) and *Yātṛā* (The Pilgrimage, 1951) could be specially noted.

Musical quality and profundity of emotions are the special features of Sundaram's poetry, whereas refinement and neatness are the hallmarks of Umashankar's compositions. The difference between the poems of Sundaram and Umashankar is like one between a forest and a city-garden. Both are faithful to themselves, but the consciousness and neatness found in the poetry of Umashankar seem to be comparatively lacking in Sundaram. In Sundaram there is compromise born of agony, in Umashankar there is delight born of understanding. Umashankar tries to see a thing in its totality. He has written some verse-plays collected in *Pṛācīna* (1944) but he could not come out successfully as a dramatist in verse. Thus Sundaram and Umashankar are the two major poets whose influence pervaded not only the Gandhian age, but the entire reality of modern Gujarati poetry.

Other Poets of the Gandhian Age. Along with them we are reminded of poets like Mansukhlal Jhaveri (1907–3[illegible]), Sunderji Betai (b. 1905), Karsandas Manek (1901–7[illegible]), Zinabhai Desai (writing under the pen-name 'Sneharashm[illegible]

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b.1903) and Pujalal (b.1901). Refinement and vigour are the special features of Mansukhlal's poetry. In his works there is a blending of Sanskrit with the dialect of Saurashtra. Two books may be mentioned specially: (a) *Phūldol* (A Swing of Flowers, 1933), (b) *Ārādhana* (Worship, 1939). Sometimes too much rationality mars his poetic art. Sunderji Betai who wrote *Indradhanu* (The Rainbow, 1939) and *Viśēṣāñjali* (The Obeisance, 1952) will be remembered for his metrical poems and songs, and 'Sneharashmi' for his songs of the Bengali type and *haiku* (Japanese form of composition carrying 17 syllables) pieces. Karsandas Manek wrote songs about social disparity. Pujalal is a poet and an aspirant associated with the Arvinda Ashram.

The Post-Gandhian Period

Passing on to the post-Gandhian poetry in Gujarati, we may say that there is not a single moment of the present which is not connected with the past to a certain extent. Thus any form of literature should be viewed on the whole in the wider perspective of time.

The poetry of the Gandhian era had as its focus the great personality of Gandhiji. This poetry was surcharged with the spirit of nationalism, social awareness, realism and idealism. It was poetry meant for the stage and not for a small gathering. The present-day poetry has come out of the public place and has entered the drawing-room. Instead of saying that its horizon has been limited, we should say that rather than getting lost on a wide circumference it is more interested in a centre point. It has become somewhat cheap and vulgar. 'Enough would it be if I, a human being, be humane' (Umashankar Joshi).

This was the aspiration—the prayer of the poet of the Gandhian era. The same poet says at a later date:

I am fragmented, I am fallen apart....
Like rhythm trying to assert itself in a metreless poem,
Like a pattern trying to emerge from the life of mankind,
Like the crumbs of bread in different houses,
not yet gathered
together in a beggar's bowl.
Day and night, night and day, I am torn with pain
Struggling to reach and hold the centre, I'm
utterly worn out.
Wasting at every breath, I am fragmented
I fall apart.

(from 'I am Fragmented', tr. the poet)

The fact that the human being is shattered has been accepted with pain. It is not concealed by the exalted cry of emotions. All the masks are removed and the reality is graphically described.

The New Trend

In the post-Gandhian poetry the feeling of disappointment, of being shattered, is manifest again and again. That is why Labhashanker Thaker (Lābhaśaṅkar Tāker, b. 1935) composes a long poem like *Manaṣni Vat* (The Tale of Man, 1968) in which he talks about a man who is devoured:

The man who is devoured cannot eat,
The man bereft of hand cannot write,
and still I am writing
Though sans eyes
I publish coloured books.
This is a habit
It is just the second nature of a human being,
This is the habit of the foolish, dead, unfortunate man.
Just a habit.

(tr. J. H. Dave)

The man is not simply devoured but is lost in the crowd, and so Ramesh Parekh (b.1940) successfully depicts immense pathos in a line like this:

All are sitting around the bonfire in a crowd within their
shivering loneliness
What sort of snake has stung
That it creates a green doubt of having seen the trees?

And for the same reason perhaps a suppressed cry is heard in the poem of Harindra Dave (b. 1930):

Seeing the ears running to and fro
Spraying the splash of floodlight

The green trees ask—
'Where and why do these go in this way forwards and
backwards?'

Seeing the movement of the people, the trees entertain a doubt, and they ask amongst themselves:

We just go down beneath the roots
(and) move towards the sky.
Are we committing any blunder?

(tr. J. H. Dave)

Here man is depicted as a parasite running on account of other's craze, and he is placed against the tree growing at its own will. The fatigue of the man is thus depicted by Vipin Parikh (b.1932):

God that grants freedom,
From the cycle of births and deaths is not needed.
What we need is a God
Who may set us free from the time-table of the local trains.

(tr. J. H. Dave)

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Thus, the downfall due to our hurried lives, their ugly after-effects and artificiality, all these are the subjects of the post-Gandhian poetry.

The poet looks with consternation at the shattered present. In the midst of such despair and disparity Jagdish Joshi (Jagdīś Jośi, 1932–78) says in one of his poems:

I concentrate as I read
The radio across the street
roars in my ear.
The electric clock on my wall
grates against the present.
The transformer of the fluorescent
light is droning.
At the door, which is already open
the buzzer chokes and dies again and again.
The servant gossips with the milkman
I see the unfamiliar face from next door
as she dials scandal.
The futile squabble in the street
enters my house through the window.
The fuse blows and darkness radiates
The whole edifice is total darkness.
Vyas calls out from the basement
'Kalidas, Tukaram, Oh Narsinh...
....Somebody! Call an electrician'.
The calm voice of Meera travels across the hall.
'Please, Krishna—Do you hear me!
Get a candle first....'
And
On my floor
in my home
in my country
a frantic search for a candle erupts.

(tr. Penny and David Dell)

The human being is not only shattered but has become non-human, and worse still affected by it; such an idea is being hammered into the post-Independence poetry.

One should make a note of the fact that being fed up of city life the modern poet is developing towards life in a forest. In that context the following song by Jayant Pathak (b.1920) deserves to be noticed:

A bit of breathing of forest in my breath
Bones of mountains in my body and
waters of rivulets in my veins;
The nest of nightingale in my chest and
sharp arrow of a primitive man in my finger
Hair on my body toss about in grass
A bit of breathing of forest in my breath,
My leaves drink the colour of the sun
my roots absorb the fragrance of the earth
Half of my body is the yellow butterflies
half is the swarm of crickets
A bit in the darkness a bit in the light
A bit in the earth, a bit in the sky
A bit of breathing of forest in my breath.

(tr. J. H. Dave)

Though the western poets have been constantly using terms like expressionism, symbolism, realism, surrealism, existentialism, etc. they have been giving prominence not to the 'isms' but to poetry itself. Unfortunately we have picked up the idiom without caring much for the essence. If we present poetry giving it the label of a particular 'ism' and believe that it is only thus that we and our poetry will be respected, we are only deceiving ourselves.

The poems of Sitanshu Yashashchandra (Sitāmśu Yaśaścandra, b.1941) are heading towards being surreal and neo-surreal. In his poem *Pompai Arthāt Bombai Nagarmān ek Khel Yāne Vāhana Nāme Bhula* (Pompei or a Play in Bombay City Meaning a Conveyance Named Mistake). Sitanshu frames his experience thus:

One's shadows are reflected on the city,
Is there anything that a person won't
find here if he searches for it?
One may find in the difficult circular way
of the coal mine
God, who is hitch-hiking and exhausted.

(tr. J. H. Dave)

The voice of the post-Gandhian poetry has not remained a public voice like that of the Gandhian age. It is becoming personal and private day by day. We cannot accept romanticism as the backbone of contemporary poetry. In the words and expression of the poem *Kavinun Vasiyatnamun* (Poets Will), Suresh Joshi (b. 1921) the poet is being romantic but that is not the romanticism of Kalapi. By the touch of his romanticism, personal agony is released in poetic expression. In *Kavinun Vasiyatnamun* the poet says:

Perhaps I may not be there tomorrow.
If the sun rises tomorrow tell him that
In the closed eyes of mine
A drop of tear remains to be dried up.

(tr. J. H. Dave)

There was charge levelled against the poetry of the Gandhian era that in those days verses were more essays than poems. It may be said about modern poetry that these poems are more essays than blank verse.

Sundaram and Umashankar—the most outstanding poets of the Gandhian era continued to write in the post

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Gandhian era also. In Sundaram there is abundance, and though he writes profusely it does not lose any freshness. The pen of Umashankar is moving towards verse-play. But it is the element of poetry in the play that attracts the connoisseur. Sneharashmi (b. 1903) turned towards *Haiku*. Murli Thakur (1910–75) had also tried that form and many budding poets are trying to make this form their own.

If the poetry of Rajendra and Niranjan (Rājendra Ṣāh, b. 1913 and Nirañjan Bhagat, b. 1927), two of the most eminent modern poets is viewed in the context of the Gandhian era, it is found that it was not thematic or subject-oriented but form-oriented; more inclined towards aesthetic beauty on account of Tagore's influence. Prahlad Parekh (1912–62) and Krishnalal Shridharani (Kṛṣṇalāl Śrīdharāṇi, 1911–60), in order to be free from the mechanical overusage of metres, and to distinguish themselves, invoked the lyric form afresh in such a way that it would not turn into a mere song but remained a poem. Rajendra and Niranjan have not simply written songs but have also assumed the challenge to work a new beauty into its metres which is conspicuously different from that of the preceding era. Metres are a peculiar feature of the poet's function, and were consciously used with a distinct stamp after Balvantrai Thakore. The poets of the Gandhian era were conscious of the functional importance of metres, but their minds were so preoccupied with Thakore's intellectualization (i.e. poetry wherein intellect predominates) and the ideals pertaining to the then current era that they paid little attention to poetic metres.

After the Gandhian age (i.e. after Sundaram and Umashankar) came Harishchandra (1906–50), Prahlad Parekh and Shridharani, and it was through their influence that the poems of Rajendra-Niranjan were shaped. Though there is only a small gap between the dates of Rajendra and that of Sundaram and Umashankar, there is a difference in their poems. Rajendra belongs to the Gandhian era, but the characteristic spirit of the era is not found in his poems and so he cannot be included in the group of poets of that age. The inspiration behind their poems is not Gandhiji but Tagore, Shridharani, Prahlad and Harishchandra.

In the Gandhian age poetry was written with a particular purpose in mind. The examples quoted below give us the impression that the poems of the subsequent era were written as if in the form of a reaction against that purpose:

As if I am out for a walk in the evening
I have not to perform a single task during this life.

(*Keval Farvane*—Just for a Walk—21-4-47, Ushanas i.e. N. K. Pandya (b. 1920); tr. J. H. Dave)

Without any mission
The wandering of mine in the world
with clothes soiled with dust.

Rajendra Shah
(*Niruddeśe*—Without any Purpose—30-10-1947)

As I have come here let me meet people.
There are lakhs of people in this fair, let me mix with them.

(Jayanta Pathak)

I have just come here for a walk!
I haven't come to do any work of yours or of mine.

(Niranjan Bhagat, tr. J. H. Dave)

The personality, the voice of the poems of Venibhai Purohit (Veṇībhāi Purohit, 1906–80) and Balmukund Dave (Bālmukund Dāve, b. 1916) is altogether different. It is only incidental that they are the centemporaries of Rajendra and Niranjan. In the beginning the poems of both of them were influenced by Gandhiji; the influence of Gandhiji was also to be found in their personalities but their world of poetry was remotely connected with the world of poetry of the third decade. The influence of Meghani is sometimes found on Makarand Dave (b. 1922). His poems have local colour and power which owe their existence to the influence of Meghani, and devotion towards beauty and the tinge of detachment found in them are due to Chandidas, Vidyapati, the *baul* songs and Tagore.

Suresh Joshi (Sureś Jośi, b. 1921) and Niranjan Bhagat (Nirañjan Bhagat, b. 1926) place Gujarati literature in the context of modernity. Suresh Joshi has his contribution in the field of criticism also. He revolts openly against the tradition through stories, critical writings, poems, and periodicals like *Maṇīṣa*, *Kṣitija* and *Ūhāpōha*, Niranjan Bhagat accepts the tradition of Kant, Thakore, Harishchandra and Eliot. Suresh Joshi follows Tagore, Baudelaire and Valeri.

In the beginning the echoes of the poems of Niranjan were heard in the poems of Priyakanta Maniar (1927–76), Hasmukh Pathak (b. 1930) and Nalin Rāval (b. 1933); whereas the influence of Suresh Joshi was heard in the poems of Gulam Mohmmad Sheikh (b. 1937), Adil Mansouri, Labhashanker Thakar and others. While dedicating his book *Phero* (The Turn, 1977) what Radheshyama Sharma has said is suggestive.

To Suresh Joshi,
Under whose influence I have been, without being impressed by him,
To Niranjan Bhagat,
By whom I am impressed, without being under his influence.

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It appears that Prajaram Raval (b. 1917), Ushanas and Jayant Pathak have not altered their way of writing very much. The poems of Prajaram under the influence of Sundaram turned towards the philosophy propounded by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The poems of Jayant Pathak kept progressing slowly but steadily.

In *Itarā* (Another, 1973) after *Pratyancā* (Bow String, 1961) the turn and progress of the poems of Suresh Joshi is quite evident. His *Eke Bhulā Padelā Romantic Kavinu-Duh Swapna* (An Evil Dream of a Romantic Poet Who Has Lost His Way), is a major poem in modern Gujarati literature.

Rajendra Shah (b. 1913) also continues to write but he is entangled in the terminology of philosophy. Natvarlal K. Pandya—Ushanas (b. 1920) also writes. There has been a development in the poems of Jayant Pathak (b. 1920) after his *Murmur* (1954) and *Vismaya* (The Wonder, 1963). The poems of Venibhai Purohit can still be recognized by their peculiarity of language. Balmukund Dave cannot satisfy the expectation that was aroused by his *Parikrama* (1955). The naturalness of the pen of Makarand Dave is the same; of course sometimes his poem fizzles out before it ends. Priyakant Maniar (1927–76) died prematurely before reaching his zenith. Likewise Manilal, Ravaji Patel (1939–68) and Jagadish Joshi (1932–78), died before they could give a complete account of their genius. Yeshwant Trivedi (b. 1934) has a voice of his own to which he gives continuous expression.

The title *Pratīka* (Symbol, 1953) given to the collected poems of Priyakant Maniar is suggestive. He was never directly connected with western poetry and used only his own intuition to write symbolic poetry. Harindra Dave has written songs, *ghazals*, metrical poems and blank verse. His genius is at its best in songs, especially the songs on the Radha-Krishna theme. These songs along with those written by Priyakant Maniar have given an altogether different dimension to the songs on Radha-Krishna written in the medieval age.

Harindra is mainly a poet of love and death. His poems and *ghazals* represent the different moods of love. Some of his books are *Āsava* (1961), *Mauna* (1966), *Arpaṇa* 1972) and *Sūryopaniṣad* (1975). In the poems of Manilal and Ravaji we can see primitivity and the intoxication of rhyme. The touch of the native language is also apparent. Jagadish has given songs, *ghazals*, metrical compositions as well as compositions in blank verse and long poems. His distinctive stamp can be seen in songs and long poems. In his poems there is a blending of the native mind and the modern man. Suresh Dalal has given a wide variety of poems consisting of metrical songs, blank verse, long poems and *muktakās*. Some of his songs depicting love are amongst the better songs of the Gujarati literature. For example:

On the river canvas
Let me, yes let me scribble your name
with intoxicated wind-fingers
petal-soft.

('Let Me Inscribe', tr. Carlo Coppola)

Astitva (Existence) represents the modern form of *khaṇḍakāvya*. The poems here depict the mechanical, artificial and hypocritical city life where one finds only masks and no men. As he says:

We are artisans
We open our lips and keep our hearts close
We open our eyes and keep our sight blind.
. . . . . .
We can cover ourselves with joy
and can put on sorrow
We can go from a marriage function
to a condolence-meeting
as we go from one room
to the other.

(*Astitva*, tr. J. H. Dave)

However, Dalal expresses faith in something beyond, when he says in 'Thy Name':

A sea of innumerable names
surges upon my doorstep;
But only one—yours alone—sails through
triumphantly.

(tr. Carlo Coppola)

His well-known works are: *Ekānt* (1966, 1978), *Astitva* (1973), *Hastākṣar* (1977), *Pyramid* (1979) and *Skyscraper* (1980).

As a result of too much imitation of primitivity and sensory transposition, a region of echoes is seen in the domain of Gujarati poetry of the seventh decade. Nothing except the poet's own control can save us from the songs full of native words and having the tinge of native emotions. Inevitably, there is a lot of limitation and exaggeration.

The painters Pradyumna Tanna and Gulam Mohmmad Sheikh have also contributed to modern Gujarati poetry. Pradyumna mostly writes songs on the theme of Radha-Krishna in the traditional pattern. The poems of Gulam Mohmmad Sheikh are modern on account of the word-pictures and the special use of language he employs.

Ramesh Parekh (b.1940) and Anil Joshi (b. 1940) are the best lyricists of the post-Independence period. Ramesh Parekh has been able to maintain continuity and freshness.

Vipin Parikh (b. 1932) who entered the field along with Jagadish Joshi is a new voice. The glamour of his early poems seems to have faded. His poetry has been stunted to an extent, on account of deliberate artful expression.

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exaggeration and monotony of satire. Most of the modern poets write only in blank verse without knowing or understanding metres. As a result, more often than not, instead of a crystallized form, only a flat form of language is found.

We should also make a mention of three poetesses, viz. Panna Naik, Jaya Mehta and Sarup Dhruv. Expression of personal feelings is a limitation of Panna's poetry. Jaya Mehta is too impersonal and as such sometimes the reader may not be fully satisfied by her poems. There is excessive sensitivity and emotion in the poems of Panna Naik which quality is altogether lacking in Jaya Mehta's compositions. Sarup Dhruv invoked poetry with a greater technique than the two poetesses mentioned above.

In one era the *ghazal* was confined to *sanam* (the beloved), *saki* (giver of wine) and *sura* (wine), and today it revolves round *śakyata* (possibility) and *śūnyata* (emptiness). After Barkat Virani, other poets like Ādil Mansuri, Manoj Khanderia (b. 1943), Chinu Modi (b. 1939), Rajendra Shukla (b. 1945), Bhagavatikumar Sharma (b. 1934), Nayan Desai, Jayendra Shekhadiwala, and others have succeeded in giving a new dimension to the *ghazal* form.

Among the new talents flourishing in the field of poetry, Hasmukh Pathak, Nalin Raval, Chandrakant Sheth, Raghuvir Chaudhari, Radheshyama Sharma, Jyotish Jani, Chandrakant Topiwala are some names which are to be remembered. The poets of the sixties and seventies are sincerely trying to give a shape to their world of experience.

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Hindi

GIRIJA KUMAR MATHUR

Modern poetry in Hindi is that body of verse written in Khariboli, a dialect of Hindi, which emerged during the closing decades of the 19th century, nearly a century after the development of Khariboli prose had begun. This was unique as in almost all the languages of the world, poetry preceded prose. Sociologically, it seems that prose is a throw-up of the process of urbanization, sense of realism and sophistication. In pastoral, feudal and underdeveloped societies poetry and music generally remain in the foreground. Prose came up later in our languages with the growth of urban centres and the impact of western civilization. When this happened in Indian literatures, other than Hindi, it did not replace the accepted literary language, but was only a new dimension added to the existing character and structure of that language. It was not so in Hindi. Brajbhasha, a dialect spoken around the Mathura-Agra region, had reigned supreme in the field of poetry for almost five centuries till the very dawn of the modern age in the second half of the 19th century. By that time Brajbhasha poetry had become thoroughly decadent and lingered on as a mere formal tradition. It had lost its dynamism though not its elegance.

Bharatendu Harishchandra (Bhāratendu Hariścandra, 1850–84) was the pioneer who ushered in the modern era in Hindi literature. With a new sense of cultural consciousness and understanding of contemporary reality he took a deliberate step in making Khariboli the medium of expression for his prose and dramatic writings. Yet so compelling was the lilt and charm of Brajbhasha that he could not relinquish it for his poetic compositions. Even in his Brajbhasha poems he, and the group of writers around him, reflected the nascent nationalism and yearning for freedom from colonial exploitation. The protest contained in his writings was, however, mild and more of a lament on the miserable lot of Indians. Khariboli, which Bharatendu and other contemporary writers under his influence adopted as their literary medium, was termed by him as *Nāgarī*—the language of culture. In 1873 he wrote in his book *Kāla Cakra* (Wheel of Time) that Hindi has undergone a transformation. It is around this period that the tradition of

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Brajabhasha poetry with its feudal past reached its nadir.

By the time the British established their hold in the 19th century, Khariboli had become the principal speech of inter-communication between various parts of the country, from the frontiers of the Punjab to Calcutta and from Uttar Pradesh to Hyderabad. In fact in the Hyderabad region an early variant of Khariboli had already struck roots which was known as 'Dakhini' (the Southern dialect). Even poetry was written in this variant by a number of poets. The earliest attempts to use Khariboli for poetry were, however, made by Amir Khusrau in the 13th century. But all these writings did not achieve the literary excellence of Brajbhasha. Khariboli was not an effective vehicle for poetry. It remained a simple, direct form of speech, a functional language of the people, of market places, towns and urban centres, and a link between the multitude of local dialects and regional languages. Despite all these serious handicaps Khariboli as the standard modern language was developing fast. Around the years 1870–80 the poets and writers were faced with a threefold challenge. The first and foremost of these was the problem of moulding Hindi into a total symbol of cultural identity. In short, a rich cultural 'body' was to be provided to a language having only bare bones and no muscle. The other was to endow the new Hindi with a sweep and power so that it acquired the capacity of being used, with variations of shade, not merely for functional and practical purposes but for conveying complex conceptual thoughts on the one hand and contemporary ideas on the other. The third challenge was more in the nature of a creative imperative. There was the pressing need of removing the duality of language which existed in prose and poetry, prose being written in Khariboli and poetry in Brajbhasha. It was left to the new poets to give this language a depth, dimensions of colour, emotion, imagery and shades of meaning.

The Formative Period

The early protagonists and poets of the new standard Hindi were faced with an uphill task. The linguistic limitations of the language, which they had chosen for poetic creation, were far too many. Many a poet had tried his hand at it; but either the new language would turn towards the grammar and syntax of Sanskrit or else would not lift itself beyond elementary narrative. No wonder that the early Khariboli poetry was marked by a simplistic externality. On this lacklustre scene Śrīdhar Pāṭhak (1859–1928) took the first bold step. He used the new Khariboli language for sustained poetic writing and his first long poem *Ekānta Vāsī Yogī* (The Forlorn Recluse) appeared in 1886. It was a verse-translation of Goldsmith's English work entitled *Hermit*. He had also translated two other works of Goldsmith, viz. *Deserted Village* and *The Traveller*. Most of his original poems are on Nature, in which he broke new ground. Although much of his poetry cannot be considered of any great merit, it was pointing to a new direction of romanticism at that time. Śrīdhar Pāṭhak was a precursor of the romantic trend which actually flowered in the early part of the 20th century.

Things were moving fast before the close of the 19th century. The circle of poets inspired by the potentialities of the new language progressively grew. Nāthūrām Śarmā Śaṅkar (1859–1932), Ayodhyā Simha Upādhyāya (1865–1947), Maithili Sharan Gupta (Maithilī Śaraṇa Guptā, 1886–1964), Rām Nareś Tripāṭhī (1889–1962), Gopāla Śaraṇa Simha (1891–1960). Lālā Bhagavān Dīn (1866–1930) and Mukuṭadhara Paṇḍeya (b. 1895), to name a few significant ones, came on the scene between 1895 and 1918. Their poetry was mostly of the narrative kind, matter of fact and message-oriented. Critics have called this period the 'Didactic Period' of poetry. But seen in a larger perspective the early narrative writing was in effect a preparatory groundwork over which the genuine poetic structure was soon to rise. This period was, therefore, a sort of a literary 'workshop' where Khariboli was beaten into shape and gained the necessary elasticity, range and power suitable for poetic expression. In less than a decade a few poets of this large group made a significant mark, the most outstanding being Maithili Sharan Gupta.

Maithili Sharan Gupta began writing regularly from 1898 and his first poem appeared in 1905 in *Saraswati*. His first famous work *Bhārata Bhāratī* which appeared in 1912 created a virtual sensation. *Bhārata Bhāratī*, was an inspired poetic work and became popular not only because of its cultural sweep but also due to the contemporary urge for freedom. With Maithili Sharan Gupta Hindi poetry came of age and attained the necessary standard and narrative power fit for a mature poetic language. He was a prolific writer and his output was formidable—51 original works and 18 verse renderings from other languages. His primary contribution lies in his long sustained works of epic dimensions. He took up the *Prabandha Kāvya* (epic form) pattern for his works, with a story or a theme from classics expressed through heightened narrative, atmosphere, characterization, climax and a finished ending. His major works are *Jayadratha Vadha* (1910), *Pañcavaṭī* (1925), *Sāketa* (1931), *Yaśodharā* (1932), *Dvāpara* (1936), *Jayabhārata* (1952) and *Viṣṇu Priyā* (1957). Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged his great contribution to the national cause and called him *Rāṣṭra Kavi* (National Laureate) on the occasion of his 50th birth anniversary celebrations in 1936.

Maithili Sharan Gupta revived the epic tradition abandoned since Tulasidas and altered it to suit the modern mind. While choosing his characters and situations from mythology he dropped a lot of the mysterious and the miraculous and presented them on a more rational and human perspective. He recaptured the epic tradition of Indian classics and enriched modern poetry by reviving the

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lost grandeur. His poetry is no doubt a reaffirmation of all that is best in the noble ideals of Indian culture. Thus, he provided a cultural dimension to modern narrative poetry.

Chāyāvāda: The Romantic Upsurge

The years from 1914 to 1920 witnessed far-reaching events in the national and international spheres. The First World War had unleashed the mass destructive power and terrors of a dehumanized industrial technology, never before imagined or seen. It was a cataclysmic event which shook the old world to its very foundations and ushered in the technological era. Almost towards the end of the war in Europe came the Russian Revolution in 1917 which shattered the old order of things and created a new revolutionary climate for change. These world events coincided with the intensification of India's freedom struggle. This political upsurge gave a new historical perspective. In the literary field India had achieved world-wide prestige when Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913. Tagore had opened new vistas before the Indian poet and had set a model of synthesis of the best in the Eastern and Western poetic traditions. His impact in changing the direction of all Indian poetry towards modern romanticism and humanism has been profound. Tagore's influence on Hindi was, however, subtle and indirect in the form of change in perspective and poetic values. Although Hindi poetry had gained considerable success in the narrative style and had revived the cultural tradition it was still struggling to discover new channels of expression for contemporary poetic experience.

At this stage three poets of exceptional talent emerged on the horizon of Hindi poetry and soon became the leading luminaries of what became the *Chāyāvāda* movement. They were Jaishankar Prasad, Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala' and Sumitra Nandan Pant. Between these three poets, Hindi poetry underwent a complete transformation. This was the second major turn in the course of modern Hindi poetry which came about in the early twenties of the 20th century. Though all the three poets belonged to the mainstream of *Chāyāvāda*'s romantic consciousness, each had his own original approach to poetry. With them poetry became what it should really be—an abandon of intense feeling, profound content and aesthetic experience expressed through fresh imagery and artistic excellence. Modern Hindi poetry achieved maturity in the writings of Prasad, Nirala and Pant.

Chāyāvāda was a romantic movement in its main approach, character and style, but with a difference. The historical forces which subtly inspired and shaped it were, the cultural renaissance, modern knowledge, struggle for independence, the demand for freedom from bondage, and human dignity. Its underlying thrust was, therefore, the reassertion of cultural tradition, human values, philosophical meaning of life, spirit of freedom, imagination and idealism. It concerned itself with all that was noble, beautiful and ideal. The spirit of freedom in *Chāyāvāda* is reflected in its rejection of the formalism of traditional poetics and a revolt against conformism of the narrative school of poetry.

Jaishankar Prasad (Jayaśaṅkar Prasād, 1889–1937) was endowed with a deep insight and versatile talent which ultimately flowered in different creative directions. Despite the difficult and tragic family circumstances he was placed in from his young age, his unquenchable longing for knowledge, both ancient and modern, led him to a planned study privately at home. He emerged as a poet around 1909, but his earlier poetry really belonged to the Narrative school. It was his second work *Āṁsū* (Tears, 1925) which drew attention, as the earlier trend of superficial exterior technique was reversed to 'inward' subjectivity. His third volume of poems entitled *Lahar* (Ripples) appeared in 1933 which had some successful lyrics on love and nature and a few powerful poems in blank verse on historical themes. During these years, Prasad had already become established as a foremost dramatist, but not as a poet of the same stature. His total poetic output was neither substantial in volume nor superior in quality as compared to the other two major poets of *Chāyāvāda*, whose writings were continuously opening the floodgates of the new trend. Disinterested in the literary controversies of his time, distressed at the petty ambitions, spurning the limelight of publicity, averse equally to criticism or approbation, Jaishankar Prasad was all the time engrossed in his own way of creative thinking and writing. Within two years of the publication of *Lahar*, appeared *Kāmāyanī*, his magnum opus, conceived and planned in a grand design on a great theme of universal relevance. It was published in 1936, just when Prasad was struggling with tuberculosis. His life was tragically cut short a few months later in 1937 and he did not live long enough to see what a monumental contribution he had made to modern Hindi poetry. With the publication of *Kāmāyanī* the *Chāyāvāda* school of poetry reached its climax. Without it *Chāyāvāda* would not have achieved the high watermark of epic grandeur.

The story of *Kāmāyanī* is the psycho-biological journey of man through time and space. Jaishankar Prasad was inspired by the fascinating legend of the great Deluge and the regeneration of earth's life by Manu, the first man who created human civilization in the post-diluvian period. Picking up different threads from the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, the Mahabharata and the Puranas, Prasad gave a new interpretation to this moving allegory in a broad human context. The existence and struggle of man has all along been on the mythical, historical, philosophical, realistic, emotional and psychic planes. Manu is the primordial human mind perpetually in quest of peace. The two women who come into his life are Śraddhā, symbolizing

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emotion and dedication and Iḍā, symbolizing intellect. The conflict which develops due to Manu's attraction for both is finally resolved in a harmonious synthesis between emotion and intellect, faith and reality. Śraddhā is thus the symbol of heart, Manu of mind and Iḍā of intellect. Without this harmony all human affairs will remain unbalanced and lead to conflicts. This is the subtle essence of *Kāmāyanī*. Although at places the technique lags far behind the power of the grand concept, the work has remained unmatched so far.

Kāmāyanī is thus a poetic testament of Man and its greatness lies in the fact that it has interpreted human personality in a timeless, cosmic frame.

It is difficult to capture the grandeur of this work in translation. Nevertheless a short example from *Kāmāyanī* is given here to show how deftly Prasad has handled his theme of elemental power and delicate sensuousness:

Cintā

(Reflection: the post-deluge scene)

Wild screams rebounded with wailing winds,
Lightning bolts unceasingly rose and fell,
Stone-deaf were vacant directions all,
Drowned in thunder's roll and peal.

The globe erupts, flames burn and leap,
Earthquakes exhale fire-torrents and fume,
Giant fissures scorch the blessed face
Of earth, awaiting destruction and doom.

Like flourescent bubbles the stars burst out,
In frenzied spasms from a mighty blow,
As in a disastrous lashing rain
A myriad fireflies glimmer and glow.

(tr. G. K. Mathur)

Jaishankar Prasad occupies a front-rank seat primarily because of his individual achievement in *Kāmāyanī*. But his style and concepts were so distant that they were not capable of emulation. Historically speaking he was not a trend-setter as the other two major poets—Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala' and Sumitra Nandan Pant—were, who exercised a profound influence on later generations in one form or the other.

Surya Kant Tripathi 'Nirala' (Sūrya Kānta Tripāṭhī 'Nirālā', 1896–1961) was the prime innovator and iconoclast of the *Chāyāvāda* age. He broke away from all the accepted norms of 'form', technique and poetic judgement. He abandoned the measured and graduated meters and rhymes till then prevalent, and introduced a new kind of blank verse based on articulated word arrangement and vowel-rich syllables containing both the elements of rhymed and free verse. As he was traversing an unexplored ground his diction was uncommon, difficult and at times uneven. The quality of his poetry is also of the same order having high crests and low troughs, as always happens with pioneers who open up new horizons. His poetic output was quantitatively not profuse, but had a variety of scintillating lyrics, long poems of epic power, social realism, pungent satire and even off-beat poems deliberately written in an absurd style for exposing the crudities of contemporary life. Among Nirala's earliest poems which created a stir owing to its bold sensuousness and freeverse was *Jūhī kī Kalī* written in 1916. It signified the first breakthrough in poetry. The major works of Nirala are *Anāmikā* (1923), *Parimal* (1930), *Gītikā* (1936), *Tulasīdāsa* (1938), *Kukur-Muttā* (1942) and *Naye Patte* (1946). His most outstanding achievement is a long poem entitled *Rām kī Śakti Pūjā* (1936) running into less than three hundred lines, but which could be compared with the best in any poetry. It is a classic of modern Hindi poetry for its sheer power, grand style, depth of feeling and artistic perfection.

Here is a translated extract from this great poem depicting the night-scene on the ocean shores, when Ravana remains undefeated and Rama returns to his hill-camp full of remorse and despair:

Black moonless night; yawning sky spews on
—billowing pitch darkness,
Directions wiped out; stunned winds are stilled,
The mighty, untamed ocean horrendously roars on
in back-margins,
Hills heavy in trance; a lone torch keeps burning away.

(tr. G. K. Mathur)

The main contribution of Nirala is in the field of 'form' and technique of poetry. There is yet another important dimension of the poet which merits attention. The social satires and poems written on the lowly, the wretched and the outcasts of society in a down-to-earth ironic style have a special significance in the evolution of modern trends. Having written for many years on 'great' and 'grand' themes the poet turned towards the stark realities around him. This was yet another kind of innovation he introduced. Actually, in these poems Nirala is attempting to bring into sharp focus the *laghu mānava* (Little Man) of our social milieu, and they should be regarded as the first manifestations of modern 'protest poetry'. Nirala thus accomplished a historic task of liberating poetry from the shackles of outmoded tradition, prudery and inhibitions.

Among the top trio of the *Chāyāvāda* movement Sumitra Nandan Pant (1900–78) is the foremost exponent of modern romanticism and contemporary intellectual trends. By comparison the other two poets—Prasad and Nirala—are

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closer to the classical cultural tradition and find their moorings more in the past. Pant is a true representative of his times. His attitude was shaped by Gandhian idealism, Nehru's liberalism and internationalism, the Marxist concepts of social justice and material human welfare combined with the inner values of spirituality. He tried to fit these varied elements into a broad moral and humanistic pattern. It carried him to the catholicity of the Indian synthesis of *satyam śivam sundaram* (the true, the good, the beautiful). The *sundaram* or the beautiful in Sumitra Nandan Pant finds its culmination in the *śivam* (the good) of life and the world of man. Pant's rise in the Hindi world was phenomenal. His first two works—*Ucchvāsa* (Sighs) and *Granthi* (The Knot), a short love story, were published in 1920. But it was his next work *Pallava* (The New Leaves) published in 1926 which caused a stir in the Hindi world of letters. *Pallava* was followed by two other volumes of poetry *Vīṇā* in 1927 and *Guñjan* in 1932. Both these works, especially *Guñjan*, provide evidence of the immense grasp the poet had on language, theme and craftsmanship. All these works up to *Yugānta* (End of an Era) in 1936 belong to the poet's first phase of imaginative nature poetry.

The second phase of Sumitra Nandan is that of humanism which started in 1935 and in which the poet comes down to the realities around him. A clear shift in his themes and diction is visible here and some of the best poems of the poet belong to this period. *Grāmyā* (The Rural Spirit, 1940) which portrays the scenes and experiences of the countryside in a neo-romantic vein, is a remarkable work. Its refreshing content, language, imagery and technique had a long-term impact. This work marks a climax in Pant's poetic career. It is also a dividing line between the earlier imaginative poetry in Hindi and the experience-oriented new age which dawned soon after.

The third phase of Pant is that of abstraction and idealism. Here the poet is more concerned with providing answers to the problems of mankind in general philosophical terms. All the ideas in this phase are at an intellectual level and they have not been galvanized into creative experience. Towards the end, Pant recaptured some of the beauty and lyricism of his earlier writings.

Sumitra Nandan Pant's contribution to modern Hindi poetry is profound and lasting. His biggest contribution is in the field of language. He moulded Khariboli into a perfectly chiselled, elegant poetic language. It acquired the power and plasticity capable of expressing various shades of meaning, scenes and situations. His other achievement is in initiating a number of trends, such as nature poetry, neo-romanticism, social consciousness and a preliminary groundwork for progressive poetry. He is without doubt a trend-setter. Thirdly, Pant greatly extended the canvas of subjects and themes for poetry. His main strength lies in his nature poetry. Nature in Pant is not a static phenomenon but a dynamic entity. During the 900 years of Hindi poetry there has been no poet who was so deeply involved with the themes of nature as was Pant. This in itself is a fitting tribute to the profound poetic genius of Sumitra Nandan Pant.

A sample from one of his poems on nature is given below:

Sonjuhī
(The Gold-creeper)

Sonjuhi, we greet her,
Lovely mountaineer,
Season follows season,
In her footsteps there,
Whose frolic, fruit and blossom are compass of the year.

Poised as in a picture,
Maiden on tip-toe,
Ready for the dance
With knee uplifted, so,
From head to foot her flesh of supple leaves aglow.

Sonjuhi, brave flower,
We shall learn of thee,
Impotent is conflict
Earthbound to earth's tree
Shall lift our heavy hearts and grow to liberty.

(tr. Mrs H. Bernard)

The 'Secular' Lyricists

Along with the *Chāyāvāda* movement another romantic cross-current was running which was more concerned with the real world and its social, political and moral affairs. It has been variously named as the *Rāṣṭrīya Dhārā* (nationalistic trend) or *Hṛdayavāda*, the poetry of passion. Individually, these do not fully describe the temper of its poets. They were more concerned with external reality, broad national and social consciousness, sentimental idealism and romantic love in life. There was a directness of expression, sense of suffering and a carefree abandon in their poetry. Makhan Lal Chaturvedi (Mākhanlāl Caturvedī, 1889–1969) was the originator of this trend. Born in a small village near Hoshangabad in Madhya Pradesh, he began writing around the same time as Maithili Sharan Gupta; but he did not achieve the same prominence due to his preoccupation with the political movement, lean output and delayed publication. Moreover, the *Chāyāvāda* movement with its higher values of culture, beauty and philosophy had become the main literary stream. Hence, Makhan Lal's style did not draw much attention and lay dormant for quite some time. His romantic approach is not nature-based like *Chāyāvāda* and his concept of love is not intangible or ethereal but grounded in reality. The main collections of his poems are *Hima-*

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kirīṭinī (1943), *Himataraṅgiṇī* (1949) and *Veṇu Lo Gūṁje Dhārā* (1960).

Balakrishna Sharma Navin (Bālakṛṣṇa Śarmā Navīn, 1897–1960), who was influenced by Makhan Lal and took his style a little further, was born in a poor family belonging to a small village near Shajapur (Ujjain) in Madhya Pradesh. Like his mentor Makhan Lal, he also joined the national freedom movement at a young age while he was in college at Kanpur. Having passed through the most trying and indigent circumstances, Navin reacted sharply to all that was fake, oppressive and degrading. Although he had a good command of the literary language, he chose an entirely different idiom for his poetry. It comprises colloquial expressions, slang, rural vocabulary, uninhibited raw exclamations, which he used as they came, to describe his experience. There is, therefore, an element of authenticity and contemporaneity in his poetry which was new to his age. Besides, there are other valuable elements such as the realism of his language, understanding of class contradictions and his concern for the destitute and downtrodden, which influenced later lyricists. His poetry of social consciousness is in many ways a forerunner of the progressive trend. Navin's temper as a poet is essentially that of a rebel, in spite of the idealist influences of his times. His bold challenge to all kinds of human bondage and his direct confrontation with reality proves it. His works include *Kumkum*, *Raśmirekhā*, *Apalak*, *Kvāsi* and *Ūrmilā*.

With Bhagwati Charan Verma (Bhagavatī Caraṇa Vermā, b. 1903) the challenge to conventionalism, confrontation with reality and commitment to freedom and change gave way to fatalism, desperation and despair. His poems depict the utter futility of struggle for existence in a world being whirled away by an inexorable destiny. Man is a helpless creature of circumstances and all striving is therefore barren and meaningless. There is a sense of defeatism in his poetry. Even his sentimental love-poems convey this despair, since according to the poet love itself is destined to be casual and short-lived. His restless longings and alienation reflect the frustrations of the middle class of his times. As a lyricist Bhagwati Charan Verma stands between the idealist-romantics of *Chāyāvāda* and the social naturalists of the thirties of the 20th century. His works include *Madhukaṇa* (Drops of Nectar, 1932), *Mānava* (The Man, 1940) and *Raṅgoṁ se Moha* (Fondness for Colours, 1962).

In the mid-thirties *Chāyāvāda* as a movement was growing weak and was fast becoming a stylized convention. The ethereal romanticism of *Chāyāvāda* which was distant, impersonal and many a time escapist, was changing at the hands of the secular poets. By far the best lyric poetry of this trend came from two poets, Mahadevi Verma (b. 1907) and Harivanshrai 'Bachchan' (b. 1907). Apart from their year of birth, there is not much in common between the two. In language, approach and content they are far apart. Mahadevi Verma (winner of the 1983 Jnanpith Award) is not so much concerned with objective reality as with subjective emotions of agony and suffering, pleasure and pain. Natural phenomena only accentuate this suffering. Such moments of utter loneliness provide a fleeting glimpse of eternity. Thus the personal suffering is sublimated as a lovelorn mystic experience. Mahadevi Verma came into prominence during the thirties and occupies an esteemed place among the lyricists of later *Chāyāvāda*. *Nīhāra* (1929), *Raśmi* (1932), *Nīrajā* (1934), *Sāndhya Gīta* (1936) and *Dīpaśikhā* (1942) are some of the significant collections of her poems.

Among the lyric poets of the thirties Harivanshrai Bachchan (Harivaṁśarāya 'Baccan', b. 1907) achieved the highest popularity. He came at a point of time when the reaction against the other-worldliness of *Chāyāvāda* had already started. Bachchan is one of the first romantic lyricists who introduced the element of 'personality' and individual experience in poetry in place of the impersonal, indirect and generic approach of *Chāyāvāda*. His poetry is far more socially grounded and portrays the pleasures and pain of life in the world of the senses. For the first time he imparted a secular character to poetry. There is a touch of tragic irony in most of his good poems thereby providing depth and intensity to his poetic experience. His expression of suffering and tragedy is real. It is born out of deep emotional experience and has the authenticity lacking in the other lyricists of his age. Furthermore he interpreted the futility and transient nature of existence in a larger social perspective. The underlying message in his works, entitled *Madhuśālā* (1935), *Madhubālā* (1936) and *Madhukalaśa* (1937) is the meaninglessness of sordid wordly ambitions, greed, acquistiveness, bigotry and intolerance in religion, morality and social behaviour. In sad poetic irony he boldly challenges the sickening conventionalism and moralist frame. Thus he gave to Hindi poetry an entirely new dimension. The charge that Bachchan's poetry is on a 'populist' level and hence lacks profundity is misplaced. It is much more easy to create an illusion of depth in highflown conceptual language and far more difficult to write genuine poetry in simple expressions. This is clearly proved by two of his best works, *Niśā Nimantraṇa* (Invitation to Night) and *Ekānta Saṅgīta* (Song of Loneliness) which came out in 1938 and 1939 respectively. The first contains short elegiac lyrics on the personal loss the poet suffered at the untimely death of his beloved young wife; the second one is the aftermath of desolation and despair. *Niśā Nimantraṇa* remains a highly moving poetic document of tragedy and suffering. In the entire modern Hindi poetry there is no work like *Niśā Nimantraṇa* which has portrayed grief and the sense of tragic void in life so profoundly.

Bachchan's first phase ends with *Ākula Antāra* (Anguished Heart) published in 1943. In his later works we find a shift from loneliness and futility of existence to the joy of life. But the element of irony returns in another form in

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poems after 1958, the first manifestation being in *Buddha aur Nācghar* (Buddha and the Dance Hall). In *Tribhaṅgimā*, *Do Caṭṭāneṁ* (Two Rocks), *Kaṭṭī Pratimāoṁ kī Avāz* (Voice of the Broken Statues) and *Bahut Din Bite* (A Long Time Ago) we find Bachchan moving on to social satire. In these later works the poet is more concerned with contemporary life, the hollowness and villainy in society and politics. His poetry set a model of lyricism in Hindi, and his contribution in changing the temper, approach and style of poetry during the thirties has been very significant.

The next major poet in the line of secular lyricists is Ramdhari Singh 'Dinkar' (Rāmadhārī Siṁha Dinakara, 1908-74) in whose writings we find a number of earlier elements fusing together. Dinkar's poetry has the narrative style of Maithili Sharan Gupta, the cultural revival of Jaishankar Prasad, the lyrical touch and rhetoric of Makhan Lal Chaturvedi and the drive and idiom of the later *Chāyāvāda*. Ramdhari Singh came into prominence with his first collection of poems entitled *Reṇukā* (Sand Grains) in 1934. His poems clearly showed that the poet did not accept themes based purely on imagination; instead he chose to approach history and reality directly. Although Dinkar's language and imagery carried reflections of *Chāyāvāda*, he made them a vehicle of his dynamic narrative style. In his later works he developed this style in a more meaningful manner. His major work, *Urvaśī*, (1961), is on the theme of love and beauty, the third canto being more poetic than the rest of the work. A short example is given below:

Urvaśī

(An extract from her soliloquy)

Breaking asunder
The mantle of rock
In icons, images and shapely forms,
It is I who emerge—
The tempestuous one
With firm breasts, close-set
A delicate waist-line,
Eyes lusty and longing,
—From the primeveal darkness of unhewn stones.

(tr. G. K. Mathur)

Dinkar's poetry lies between the two nodal points of romanticism—the aesthetic approach and the external awareness and he gives expression to both these elements alternately and sometimes simultaneously. Among the 'rebellious' poets of the thirties Dinkar occupies a significant place.

In Bachchan and Dinkar we clearly see the shift from *Chāyāvāda*. There is a deep struggle in these poets to break away from the idiom of *Chāyāvāda*. But whereas Bachchan succeeded in his attempt in finding his own different diction and idiom, Dinkar's writings show that he could not get far away from it. In Narendra Sharma (b.1913) we find the change more pronounced. The element of 'personality', individual experience, fresh and concrete imagery, physical emotion and passionate sensuousness set him apart from all earlier lyricists. With Narendra Sharma we are almost at the threshold of the modernistic trend, which started around 1940.

Another significant romantic lyricist of this period is Rameshwar Shukla 'Anchal' (Rāmeśvara Śukla Añcala, b.1915). The poems in his first collection entitled *Madhūlikā* (1938) had beauty for its theme. Rich in imagery and colourful expression, Anchal's lyrics are replete with the longings of the body-beautiful. Behind the sweet phrases and sensuous descriptions of beauty his poems exhibit a thirst born out of unfulfilled desires and perpetual quest for physical thrill. His descriptions are sensitive yet there is a ring of disenchantment in them since they are more like fantasies of flesh in a rainbow world.

Pragativāda (Progressive Movement)

The period between 1936–42 witnessed the end of the *Chāyāvāda* age and the beginning of two new and powerful currents in poetry. These were the Progressive Movement and Experimentalism, viz. *Pragativāda* and *Prayogavāda* respectively. Both these trends started about the same time and interacted closely in the beginning. In fact, the new awareness of social and historical reality and confrontation with the modern age ushered in by the Second World War and the conflicts generated by the struggle for Independence compelled poets to find new avenues of thought and expression. Neither the approach of the previous poets nor the language, 'form' and technique could adequately capture the fast unfolding objective situation or the subjective experience of a different kind of reality. Marxism had given a comprehensive interpretation of history, social reality and direction of change. It opened new vistas before the poets and writers and provided them with a more scientific understanding of human affairs. Man's destiny was now viewed in a larger social and historical perspective. This was the period when the romantic trend in Hindi had also taken a new turn and brought in a more realistic human element and direct concrete experience. The new poetic sensibility was thus a socially-oriented broad creative upsurge in which both the neo-romantics and the Marxists participated. During the same period the new generation of neo-romantic poets who were largely moved by the fresh understanding of life and living were searching unexplored forms of language, diction and expression. It is difficult to mention the names of significant poets who clearly and specifically belong to one particular group, as most of the genuine poets belonged to both the trends. Nevertheless,

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among the progressive poets who made a definite mark, mention should be made of Kedar Nath Agrawal, Nagarjun, Ram Bilas Sharma, Rangeya Raghav, Shiv Mangal Singh 'Suman', Trilochan Shastri and Bharat Bhushan Agrawal. These poets had a more pronounced Marxist approach although quite a few of them contributed to the search for a new 'form' and style.

Kedar Nath Agrawal's (Kedāra Nātha Agravāl, b. 1911) poems have the raw freshness of the countryside, uneven grasslands, lush fields and pastures and the rough simplicity of the toiling farmers, all fusing into a natural unassuming idiom. His descriptions of nature, love and beauty are also simple, straight and sincere. He has so far published five collections of poems starting with the first publication *Yuga ki Gaṅgā* (Ganges of the Ages) in 1947 to his latest work *Gul Meṁhdī* (Flowering Henna) in 1978. He is one of the early poets of the late thirties whose writings signified the advent of the new poetic trend.

Ram Bilas Sharma's (Rāmavilāsa Śarmā, b. 1912) poetic output has not been much compared to his critical and conceptual writings. Yet his early poems and sonnets, which appeared during 1938–40, were full of innovations in themes, style, imagery and technique. He is one of the early experimental poets whose writings successfully explored new directions of form and language combined with a keen understanding of social reality. He creates a total artistic atmosphere to depict a scene or situation. His imagery and diction were at once new and fresh and his grasp of tradition has been profound. Ram Bilas Sharma contributed a great deal to the progressive movement more by his critical writings, although his poetry belongs to the neo-romantic trend.

Rangeya Raghav (Rāṅgeya Rāghava, 1923–62) had a versatile talent and successfully tried his hand at poetry, literary criticism, short stories and novels. He was an innovative poet who combined experiments with social realism. Rangeya Raghav died comparatively young but left a deep mark on the Progressive trend of poetry.

Shiv Mangal Singh 'Suman' (Śiva Maṅgala Siṁha Suman, b. 1916) has been in the forefront of the Progressive movement, although he is essentially a romantic-lyricist. There is a youthful exuberance in his poetry, whether it is his love poetry or narrative poems written on contemporary reality and topical events. Suman reflects the progressivist stand in his narrative poems. Much of his writings are no doubt imposing and stirring but many a time verge on rhetoric and grandiloquence. Even in these long, narrative poems, his broad humanism, zeal and drive are clearly visible. However, his poems on love and romance are sensitive and sincere and his main strength lies in such poems.

By far the most forceful voice of the progressive poetry is Nagarjun (Nāgārjuna, b. 1911) who developed an original style and diction. His deep understanding of tradition and sense of history admirably combines aesthetic perception with social consciousness. His expression is sincere and uninhibited and there is a broad sweep of realism in his poetry. His versatile talent apart from making him a major poet of the progressive trend has also made him a front-rank novelist of rural life.

Bharat Bhushan Agrawal's (Bhārata Bhūṣaṇa Agravāl, 1919–75) poems are generally socially oriented with subdued leftist leanings. But he actually belongs to the mainstream of experimental new poetry. His main strength has been his vision of the social irony of contemporary life. Among the nine collections of his poems the more significant ones are *Chabi ke Bandhan* (1941), *O, Aprastut Man* (1958), *Anupasthit Log* (1965), *Ek Uthā Huā Hāth* (1970) and the last one *Utnā Voh Sūraj Hai* published posthumously in 1978, for which he was given the Sāhitya Akademi Award. He is the first poet who introduced the limerick form named by him as *Tuktak*.

Shamsher Bahadur Singh and Gajanan Madhav 'Muktibodh' also belong to the Progressive trend, but their contributions to the experimental and socially-oriented neo-romantic trend has been profound.

Within a decade and half the broad-based *Pragativāda* trend of poetry suffered a serious setback due to the utterly narrow and doctrinaire approach of the then Marxist ideologists and progressive literary critics. Their insistence on the oversimplified, theoretical application of Marxist social equations and evaluation of creative writing in terms of this cliche-ridden approach greatly narrowed the field of poetry and reduced it to sloganistic versification. This approach alienated the movement not only from the poets of neo-romanticism, realism and humanism but even from the talented poets who had come under the spell of Marxist ideology. The result was that the other kind of poetry of neo-romanticism, social consciousness and deep humanism developed into the mainstream of poetry. The neo-romantics and the talented Marxists contributed equally to its development. There is no doubt that the *Pragativāda* trend changed the climate of poetry by providing a social dimension to creative art and a new understanding of tradition, politics and contemporary history. This basic change was completed by the *Prayogavāda* poetry by bringing in the missing factor of personalized emotion, aesthetic enrichment, values of artistic excellence in language, technique, style and concrete humanism. Thus with the social consciousness of *Pragativāda* and the modernistic sensibility of *Prayogavāda* the curtain was finally brought down on *Chāyāvāda* around 1940.

Prayogavāda (Experimentalism)

The *Prayogavāda* movement was not a 'formalist' movement concerned merely with experimentation in form and technique of poetry as the name suggests or is generally

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believed. The name is a misnomer and was derisively given to it by some of the dogmatic progressive critics around 1948–49, when it had already become the mainstream of new writing. The main motivation in dubbing it as *Prayogavāda* or Experimentalism was that the *Pragativāda* movement was gradually losing ground due to its own dogmatic mistakes and had greatly narrowed the field of poetry. Hence, all those genuine poets who were attempting to express a new realm of experience in fresh experimental 'forms' joined the movement of new writing. The examples of Shamsher Bahadur Singh, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh, Bharat Bhushan Agrawal, Prabhakar Machwe, Naresh Mehta and Kedar Nath Singh—all genuine poets—amply prove this. They were initially influenced by Marxism but veered away from the narrow, almost sectarian intolerance of the then *Pragativāda* ideologues. At this stage the poetry of neo-romanticism, radical dynamism and humanism developed into the mainstream of poetry, as we have already seen. Thus the third major breakthrough in modern Hindi poetry occurred with the new writing during 1938–42. By then a number of poets of the new generation had already broken fresh ground in the field of language, diction, imagery and themes and the works of some of the poets like Girija Kumar Mathur and Bharat Bhushan Agrawal had been published in 1941 and 1942 respectively.

The new poets were expressing their experiences in a far deeper personalized manner rather than resorting to philosophical concepts, sentimental idealism or abstractions in the form of distant social 'types'. There was no attempt to give a deliberate 'forced' message or rationalization of emotion. The conflict and tension of modern life, the subjective experience of physical love or of struggle and suffering, the reactions to one's own environment, to the common and closer reality and the external phenomena which became part of the inner experience were all new to poetry. A new language and diction closer to the spoken word was evolved, experiments in new lyrical patterns were tried, imagery was not used as an outer embellishment but in a manner that it became a vortex of emotional experience. Free verse was adopted in place of the regular rhythmic and mechanically organized verse-forms. Thus poetry for the first time acquired a distinctive individuality and the value of personaltzed 'style'.

The *Prayogavāda* movement was thus a quest for human personality, not merely of the 'political' man but man in all his entirety, his social, political and philosophical destiny in the contemporary context as well as the relevance of life in the larger dimensions of time and space. In 1943 the new writings of seven foremost 'experimentalists' were published in a collection named *Tāra Saptaka* (The Latest Octave), under the editorship of S. H. Vatsyayana 'Agyeya', with a well-thought-out introduction by him. *Tāra Saptaka* included all the aspects of the new trend and contained the poems of progressive realists, neo-romantics and 'individualists'. It was a representative collection of the poetry written between 1938 and 1943 and made a big impact in signifying the break from the past poetry of *Chāyāvāda*. It created literary history and became a landmark of modern poetry.

The major poets who contributed richly to this trend and have stood the test of time are S. H. Vatsyayana 'Agyeya', Shamsher Bahadur Singh, Bhavani Prasad Misra, Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh and Girija Kumar Mathur.

The poetry of Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh (Gajānana Mādhava Muktibodha, 1917–64) is marked by a deep anguish born out of intense suffering. It has been expressed in solid blocks of imagery, foreboding atmosphere, awe-inspiring fantasy and unusual raw symbolism—all portraying the terror and tragedy of a tyrannical social environment. Through this fearsome imagery and terrifying fantasy Muktibodh depicts the violence and oppression of the contemporary world. His major poems were published posthumously in two collections entitled *Cānd kā Muṅh Teḍhā Hai* and *Bhūri Bhūri Khāk Dhūl*. He did not live long enough to see what a valuable and lasting contribution he had made to modern poetry. A short extract from his powerful poem *Cambal kī Ghaṭioṁ Meṁ* (In the Ravines of the Chambal) is given below:

On this desolate wasteland
Of fissured plains,
Deep-cut ravines,
Eroded canyon-passes,
A deepening night
Lashed by strange winds,
Wrenching and tearing and breaking asunder
Huge banyan trees and thorny 'Babools'
Surround me;
In dimmed moonlight
And half-concealed mysteries
Of winding hillocks
I wander, knowing not whither and why?
Only the savage winds
Traversing the blackened vacancies
Of starry distances
On some weird trail
Come, sniffing and searching the forlorn ground.

(tr. G. K. Mathur)

Shamsher Bahadur Singh (Śamśer Bahādur Siṁha, b.1911) started experimenting around 1945 and his basic sensibility was shaped by neo-romanticism. There is a pronounced element of delicate lyricism in him and the lyrical lilt is all along present even in his free-verse. His poems are intense and short, like moving vignettes of symbols and condensed imagery. This symbolic suggesti-

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vity is his primary power, but it also places some limitation on his communicability at times. His important poetic works are *Kuch Kavitāyeṁ* and *Cukā Bhī Huṁ Nahīṁ Maiṁ*. But there is no doubt that Shamsher's contribution to modern poetry has been very original. He is one of the major poets who combines most artistically the best elements of the new poetic sensibility.

Among the poets who pioneered the movement of new poetry and shaped its direction, the name of Girija Kumar Mathur (Girijā Kumāra Māthur, b.1919) stands on a different plane. He has contributed to many dimensions of the new trend. His poetry represents some of the best elements of the post-*Chāyāvāda* period, such as lyricism, neo-romanticism, progressive social realism and new experiments in form, technique, language and style of poetry. He initiated the modernistic sensibility of the technological age and even the futuristic concepts of space-age poetry. He has a subtle and sensitive perception of beauty and external reality and his poetry is replete with sensuousness and concrete imagery. He combines both progressive critical realism and innovative romanticism.

Girija Kumar Mathur is no doubt a trend-setter and there is a balanced fusion of tradition, realism, aestheticism and modernity in his poetry. It is therefore difficult to place him in any one of the accepted poetic categories. All in all he is a forward-looking, dynamic poet, who encompasses the contemporary with visions of future. His important poetic works are *Nāś Aur Nirmāṇ*, *Dhūp ke Dhān*, *Śilā Paṅkh Camkīle*, *Bhītarī Nadī kī Yātrā* and *Sākṣī Rahe Vartamān*. Two short extracts from his poems are given to show the different dimensions of the poet:

Khule Bāloṁ kī Rāt
(The Night of Ravenous Hair)

The shadow of your dark, black magic has pervaded my being;
Within me your body keeps time
To the tune of some wild song's floating melody,
Even during sleep
Its echo reverberates;
And in the same vital place its melody pulsates.

The shadow of your wonder has permeated my world;
My calm eyes see strange fantasies and things,
Hazy objects reappear and acquire a new meaning;
Dust settling on age lifts up,
As the incomplete monument
Within me
Moves towards consummation:
In this exhausting boredom of superfluous tasks
You with the night of open hair, suddenly come....

(tr. Taavishi Tewary)

(2)
The Ultimate Sin
(Dedicated to Hiroshima)

From a face in shreds
An eye suddenly torn off,
In the dying cornea
The twisted city is snuffed out
Like a burnt out magic-snake;
A blinding flash
Passing through widened body-pores
And the word 'light' has become an obscene curse.

Pulp globules of flesh
The flowing gun of rocks
Torrents of steel
In the vast vaporous funnel of the sky
All living and non-living things
Flying out like burning cinders.

(tr. the author)

Bhavani Prasad Misra (Bhavānī Prasāda Miśra, b.1913) is not strictly an experimentalist and is closer to the secular-narrative trend of poetry of the mid-thirties. He had already evolved his own style, uninfluenced by *Chāyāvāda* or Marxism. He was influenced more by Gandhian *Sarvodaya*. During the late forties he imbibed the approach of the new trend of writing. His use of the simple, colloquial and conversational idiom of everyday life was new to poetry. It added a fresh dimension to communicability. Despite this directness and almost disarming simplicity there runs a strain of detached philosophical irony in most of his poems which imparts a deeper meaning to the otherwise commonplace rhymed narrative. Throughout his poetry there is an expression of hope and the higher purpose of life. Being a prolific writer and not a choosy one, Bhavani Prasad Misra's poems do not maintain a uniform standard but there is no doubt about his contributions towards a new colloquial style in poetry. His significant works are *Gīt Faroś*, *Cakit Hai Dukh*, *Andherī Kavitāyeṁ*, *Bunī Hu Rassī* and *Khuśbū ke Śilā-Lekh*.

S. H. Vatsyayana Agyeya (Saccidānanda Hirānanda Vātsyāyana Ajñeya, b. 1911) is a front-rank poet and thinker of New Poetry. He brought in a new approach and style in poetry. His critical and conceptual writings had a profound impact on the later trend of *Nayī Kavitā* which started around 1952–53. Before he took to experimentation around 1942, he had written poems mostly in the *Chāyāvāda* style, although at times with a different thematic tenor. By then Agyeya had become an established novelist, prose-stylist and literary critic. He had an eventful life which shaped his individualistic viewpoint and a sense of self-contained, solitary identity. But till the publication of *Tāra Saptaka* (1943), under his editorship, he had not

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made any significant mark as a poet. He was struggling to find fresh avenues of style and expression. Between 1943 and 1948 Agyeya moved forward quickly and developed his own inimitable style, philosophical approach and an intellectual direction in poetry. For the first time he brought poetry close to prose diction and provided a conceptual dimension to it. He rejected the overloaded musicality of the prevalent lyric and the romantic exuberance in expression and style. He wrote a different kind of verse, with greater emphasis on 'content'. The movement of his poetry is from 'without' to 'within' hence he does not concern himself directly with external historical or socio-political reality. There are two clear phases of Agyeya's poetry, the earlier phase being highly subjective and individualistic. Poems like *Harī Ghās Par Kṣaṇ Bhar* (A Moment on the Green Grass, 1949), *Bāvrā Aheri* (1954) and *Indra Dhanu Raunde Hue Ye* (The Trampled Rainbows) fall within this category. His main theme here is the uniqueness of the individual, his free choice 'to be' unfettered by any demands of society, system or ideology. In the later phase beginning with *Arī O' Karuṇā Prabhāmay* (1959), *Āṅgan Ke Pār Dvār* (The Door Beyond the Court, 1961), *Kitnī Nāvoṁ Meṁ Kitnī Bār* (How Many Times in How Many Boats, 1967), and *Pahle Maiṁ Sannāṭā Buntā Hūṁ* (Let me First Weave Siience, 1974) we find a shift towards sublimation of the earlier assertive ego, comprehension of nature as an ennobling identity, value of compassion and the realization that the individual entity is just a humble part of the larger division of things. Agyeya has reached this philosophical level not only through subjectivity and introspection but through his nature poetry as well, which is one of the major segments of his writing.

Agyeya's poetry is cool, detached and reflective and sometimes remote and abstract. The lyrical element and the neo-romantic approach was largely abandoned by him. He mostly uses a *tatsama*—heavy language, reminiscent of *Chāyāvāda* and the mannerism of his idiom makes his diction uneven and halting. Many of his latest poems are at the level of passing observation and comments only, although they have the usual veneer of his standard style. His poetry expresses the values of individual freedom and the inner culture of man. An extract from one of his well-known poems *Nadī ke Dvīp* (Islets of the River) included in his work *Harī Ghās Par Kṣaṇ Bhar* (A Moment on the Green Grass) is given here:

We are islands in the river
We can't ask that its flow pass us by
For that flow makes us what we are:
Those curves, capes, profiles, those steep-headlands dry
banks of sand—
All shapes are of its moulding.
The river is our mother, we are because of her.
We are islands;
This is not our doom, but destiny.
The river is the mother, we her sons,
—cradled in her lap,
And through her, linked with land,
The land that is our father.

(tr. Agyeya)

* * *

Nayī Kavitā

By 1950 the new trend of poetry had fully established itself. Among the second generation of poets of New Writing, who called their poetry *Nayī Kavitā*, the impact of neo-romantic humanism is clearly visible in some of the more talented poets. No doubt quite a few poets of *Nayī Kavitā* came under existentialist influence, but it only resulted in a cliche-ridden repetitive poetry. Among those who made a definite mark of the broad stream of new poetry the names of Dharmavir Bharati, Naresh Mehta, Raghuvir Sahay and Kunwar Narain stand apart from the rest.

Dharmavir Bharati (b. 1926) is the most significant and profound poet of *Nayī Kavitā*. Bharati for the first time interpreted mythology in a new and modern perspective. His *Andhā Yuga* (1954) is a major poetic work. Based on the last stages of the Mahabharata, it portrays the horrors of a total war, in which everything is lost both for the victor and the vanquished. The common people who are not partisans in it and do not quite comprehend the purpose of the devastation, suffer equally. His other important work is *Kanu Priyā* (1959) in which Radha, the beloved, calls Krishna back from his history-making role to the eternal freshness and solace in the world of love and beauty. Both the works are, therefore, complementary to each other and they fully represent the two dimensions of the poet.

Naresh Mehta (b. 1924) is a sensitive poet who developed his own reflective and original style. Basically a lyricist and neo-romantic, he made a mark with his long poem, *Samaya Devatā* (Time-Deity, 1948) which depicts the movement of history over a large realistic canvas. His later important works are—*Samśaya kī Ek Rāt* and *Mahā Prasthān* (1975) in which he has interpreted the Rama legend and Yudhishthira's character in a modern context. Naresh Mehta is essentially a neo-romantic poet of hope and humanism.

Raghuvir Sahay (b. 1929) created a new style using the language and diction picked straight out of everyday life, which imparted a social dimension and realism to poetic language. He also introduced the 'speech-rhythm' diction in free verse through which he captures the irony, tensions and absurdity of contemporary life. His poems carry a foretaste of the change from the existentialist negation and defeatism of *Nayī Kavitā* to the trend of socio-political realism, which was soon to emerge.

Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena (b. 1927) is another significant poet whose earlier poetry had a romantic flavour and

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colourfulness of imagery. He portrays the pathos and irony of modern life in a value system that has lost all relevance. His long poem *Kuāno Nadī* (Kuano—the River of Sorrow, 1973) is a good example of his socially relevant poetry.

Among the other good poets of *Nayī Kavitā* mention may be made of the substantial contribution of Vijaydev Nārāin Sāhī, Vīrendra Kumār Jain, Jagadīś Gupta, Kuṁwar Nārāin, Laxmī Kānt Verma, Ajit Kumar, Shakunt Māthur and Kedār Nāth Singh. They evolved their own style and sensitivity of experience and made valuable contribution in furthering the movement of new poetry.

Neo-Realism

By the time the seventh decade began, the movement of *Nayī Kavitā* petered out. The process of socio-economic development and urbanization brought forth new contradictions in our society. The world at large was passing through a new turmoil of historical and cultural change. Poets were conscious of the dehumanization, facelessness, violence, permissiveness and degradation of human life in a consumerist oppressive system. Thus city culture and anti-establishment 'protest' came into sharp focus in the poetry of the sixties. As a result a new trend of neo-realism took shape. It had two distinct aspects, one which had an aggressive nihilistic approach and the other having greater social relevance. The former aspect of 'protest' depicted the brutalization of man, his baser instincts of violence and sexual perversions. The latter was more concerned with man's physical, social and emotional struggle, his tragedy and suffering, with a keener understanding of the socio-political and cultural reality. Shrikant Verma (Śrīkānta Varmā, b. 1931) and Kailash Vajpeyi (Kailāsa Vājapeyī, b. 1933) are the two early poets of 'protest', who made a mark with their unmasking, aggressive styles. However, whereas the understanding of social and historical reality is clearer in Shrikant Verma, it is not so with Kailash Vajpeyi. In Shrikant Verma there is a broader sweep of social realism. Kailash Vajpeyi has integration and intensity but there is a sense of tragic defeat in his poetry. Recently he has turned inward in unravelling mystic psychic experiences. Jagdish Chaturvedi's (Jagadīś Caturvedī, b. 1932) earlier writings portrayed the violence and degradation of urban life and living, but recently he has taken to more serious and philosophical themes in interpreting myths in a modernistic perspective.

The two powerful and promising poets of the poetry of 'protest' clearly representing both the above aspects are however Raj Kamal Chaudhary (Rāja Kamala Caudharī) on the one hand and Dhoomil (Dhūmil, 1936–75) on the other. Raj Kamal has dealt with the dark and evil aspects of life, its morbidity, tragedy and death with uninhibited boldness.

On the other side of the spectrum stands Dhoomil, a poet of power, intensity and great range of social realism. His poetry is a combination of emotion, irony and the suffering of the common man caught in social contradictions. Both Raj Kamal Chaudhary and Dhoomil died before 40 in tragic circumstances, before they could contribute more richly and profoundly to modern poetry. But with them poetry has undergone a definite change. In the youngest generation of poets the second trend of social realism has taken root, which has a broad fusion of the many elements of *pragativāda*, *prayogavāda*, poetry of protest and modernity. This then is the latest trend of the seventies.

Retrospect

Modern Hindi poetry has travelled far from its early halting beginnings towards the closing decades of the 19th century. It broke away from the decadent formalism of the feudal past and replaced the old rural dialect used for poetry with a more robust, urban and widely understood language—that is Khariboli. It took nearly 40 years to refine this functional language and make it a sensitive vehicle for poetry. Half a century is not a long time for a new poetic language to grow and acquire a stature in terms of its range, power and literary achievement. Many factors have been responsible for this unparalleled transformation. One of them is that modern Hindi is a comparatively young literary language, not weighed down heavily by successive layers of inhibiting convention. It is an 'open' language, capable of assimilating new ideas and contemporary perspectives. But despite its 'openness' to new influences it did not lose its moorings in the rich cultural heritage. Hence, it has also the capacity for rejection of whatever is alien and unsuitable to the national ethos. No culture can retain its dynamism without the simultaneous capacity of both absorption and rejection. Mere absorption will result in a total loss of identity and out-of-hand rejection would render it insular and dead. Thus modern Hindi poetry absorbed and reflected the values of changing contemporary situations, yet moulded them to suit its intrinsic genius.

The second important factor is that modern Hindi poetry has kept its sights properly focused on the forward-looking tradition of deep-rooted humanism and opposition to all kinds of oppression which erode or degrade it. The basic ethos of Hindi does not accept extremist or 'exclusive' concepts, artificially imbibed or implanted ideas, dogmatic narrow or sectarian theories and practices, approaches or attitudes. There is sufficient evidence of this quality in the process of the development of modern Hindi poetry. The judgement of time is therefore clear and resounding. Only that poetry has stood the testimony of time which has remained closely rooted in the soil, culture and aspirations of the people and which has interpreted human destiny not only in the contemporary context but for the future as well.

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Kannada

SHANTINATH K. DESAI

A Theoretical Framework

A critical survey of modern Kannada poetry covering the period of what is known as the Indian Renaissance and—if the Renaissance has, by any chance, ended—the post-Independence era, would probably require a workable theoretical framework which is capable of containing within it most of the significant trends and patterns of poetry that emerged and dominated during the above-mentioned time span. This framework has necessarily to be socio-historical, since the major cultural trends and patterns of a country are primarily governed by these forces. The consolidation of British power in India in the 18th and 19th centuries was organically connected with a kind of cultural paralysis of the country. The dialectics of cultural regeneration brought forth two trends simultaneously: (1) the absorption of the western influences which seeped in through English education; and (2) the characteristic patriotic rediscovery of the past with a view to asserting national identity. Since a cultural Renaissance is invariably a Romantic affair, it was the 19th-century British Romanticism, and not the early 20th-century European cultural perplexity, that influenced the early 20th-century India, and naturally, Karnataka. And since the Renaissance was inevitably a reaction against the moribund Indian culture of the immediate past, the past that was glorified here was that of the Vedic and Puranic periods of Indian history. The growing anti-British feeling resulted in deriving inspiration from anti-British European cultures like the Irish and the German—from the Celtic and Aryan cultures, rather than the Anglo-Saxon. The Gandhian era was essentially a romantic period in which great political and social idealism combined with optimistic cultural resurgence. When freedom was in sight, in the early forties, European movements like Socialism and Communism started influencing the Indian intelligentsia. With the arrival of freedom, marked ominously by the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the forces that were slightly underground came into the open—the forces of communalism, corruption, economic rivalry and power politics, with the result that a mood of disillusionment and helplessness descended upon the Indian social and political reformers and other intellectuals. It is during this period that Romanticism ceased to be an operating force; a kind of cultural pessimism set in and modernist ideas like existentialism, alienation, nihilism, absurdism and neutralism held sway. Two decades of modernism, the fifties and the sixties, engendered dialectically a new social awareness and a strong desire for commitment. The eighties will, it is hoped, reveal the synthetic fruits of the present dialectics between amoral and ahistorical modernism and a moral and historical purposiveness.

With the above framework in view, we may roughly divide the history of modern Kannada literature into four well-defined phases: (1) 1850–1920: the period of cultural awakening, characterized by the rise of a new national consciousness and a search for a new idiom; (2) 1920–50: the period of the great political struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi during which there was an efflorescence of Indian Romanticism and also a reaction to it in the form of social realism; (3) 1950–70: the period of disillusionment and of experimentation—of cultural pessimism, on the one hand, and, on the other, an exploration of new values in the context of rapidly changing political and social structures, this modernist period being characterized by a fresh search for a new idiom; and (4) 1970 onwards: the transitional period of political uncertainties and a new social awakening during which modernism has given way to, or sometimes taken up the garb of, social purposiveness and commitment.

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The Preparation: 1850–1920

An important fact about the Kannada-speaking area, which is now known as Karnataka, was that it consisted of five parts—the Mysore state, Bombay-Karnatak, the South Kanara district which was then in Madras Presidency, the small state of Coorg and a portion which formed part of the then Hyderabad state. The forces of the Renaissance emanating from Bengal were a little slow to reach the Kannada-speaking areas, especially those under the native rulers. The areas in Bombay and Madras Presidencies were the first to awaken to the new forces—the North Karnatak imbibed them through Marathi, and South Kanara through the influence of the early Christian missionaries of Mangalore. While in the Bombay and Madras areas, poets like Shantakavi (Śāntakavi, 1856–1920) and Panje Mangesh Rao (Panje Mangēśa Rāv, 1884–1937) were writing a new kind of poetry under the influence of Marathi folk poetry and English respectively, in Mysore, poets like Basawappa Shastri (Basavappa Śāstri, 1843–91) and Sosale Ayyashastri (Sōsale Ayyaśāstri, 1854–1934), both patronized by the Maharaja of Mysore, Chamaraja Wodeyar, wrote poetry in the old Kannada metrics with Sanskrit poetry as the source of their models. It is interesting to note, however, that in 1886 the Mysore Royal Court issued an injunction to translate books from English into Kannada, and accordingly a number of Shakespeare's plays were translated into Kannada towards the end of the 19th century. The establishment of the Karnatak Vidyavardhak Sangha in Dharwar in the year 1890 is a milestone in the history of the cultural Renaissance of Karnatak. The first decade of the 20th century saw the rise of a number of literary magazines from Dharwar, Mysore, Bangalore and Mangalore, all of which encouraged the translation of lyrics and narrative poems from English into Kannada. Mention must be made of two great literary figures who were primarily responsible for launching a revolution in Kannada poetry: (1) B. M. Srikantaiah (Śrīkaṇṭaiyya, pen-name: 'Srī', 1884–1946) who in a famous speech, which he delivered at the Karnatak Vidyavardhak Sangha in 1911, declared that English should help us in getting rid of the defects of language and style that Kannada had inherited from Sanskrit; and (2) M. Govinda Pai (Gōvinda Pai, 1883–1963) who tried his best to modernize old Kannada and decided in 1911 to reform Kannada metrics by giving up rhyme altogether. Though no great poetry was written in Kannada up to 1920, the assiduous efforts of all the poets mentioned above prepared the way for the emergence of a new kind of poetry and poetic idiom. The new idiom was shaped through two important processes: (1) by the translation of English poems into Kannada, which gave the language a certain flexibility and subtlety, and turned it into a vehicle of new emotion and thought complexes which had been instilled through English education; and (2) Kannada poetry which had lost its vitality in the preceding two centuries was revitalized by the use of the spoken language, on the one hand, and of the modes of folk poetry, on the other. It is what is known as the *Deśi* (popular) mode as against the *Mārga* (classicist) mode that gave Kannada language a rootedness that it might have lost if it had been subjected to purely English influences. Thus, the dialectics of the native against the foreign lent a living tension and dynamism to Kannada, the fruits of which can be seen in the following phase of Kannada poetry.

The Romantic 'Navōdaya' Period: 1920–50

The second phase of modern Kannada poetry was inaugurated by B. M. Srikantaiah's *Iṅgliṣ Gītagaḷu* (Songs from English) published in 1921, though a few of them had already been printed in a magazine in 1919. This book of translations—'transcreations' would be a better word—*Iṅgliṣ Gītagaḷu*, is of great historical importance, since it paved the way for modern Kannada poetry. The book contains 63 poems in all, 3 of which are the poet's own. Nine out of the remaining 60 are Shelley's poems, 7 Burns's, 9 Wordsworth's, 3 each of Browning, Tennyson and Scott and 2 each of Shakespeare, Southey, Byron, Campbell and Cowper. They all deal with the usual Romantic themes like love, nature, patriotism, war, God and natural human joys and sorrows. The striking features of these transcreations are the adoption of English end-rhymes and English stanzaic patterns and the use of common speech both in diction and rhythm. The fact that no poem of Keats's was taken up for translation, nor any of the complex poems of Shelley, indicates that Srikantaiah knew that the Kannada language was not yet strong enough for the attempt. The task of strengthening poetic Kannada was left to two great Romantic poets, K. V. Puttappa of Mysore (Puṭṭappa, pen-name: 'Kuvempu' b. 1904), Srikantaiah's favourite disciple, and D. R. Bendre (Bēndre, pen-name: 'Ambikātanayadatta', b. 1896) from North Karnataka—the two great pillars of the *Navōdaya* movement in Kannada.

The poetry of the *Navōdaya* movement (1920–50) consisted of two opposite trends: (1) the central trend of romanticism, which released the lyrical energies of young men who wrote with spontaneous passion; and (2) a neo-classical trend of conservatism which emphasized the value of tradition and ancient Indian culture. To speak of the second trend first, poets like Govinda Pai, D. V. Gundappa (Guṇḍappa, 1889–1975), P. T. Narasimhachar (Narasimhācār, b. 1905), and V. Sitaramaiah (Sītārāmaiyya, 1899–1[illegible]) wrote a comparatively learned kind of poetry with classical control and thoughtful poise. Their poetry tended to be a poetry of statement rather than of exploration. D. V. Gundappa's *Mankuṭimmana Kagga* (The Tedious Speech of Dull Timma, 1943) for instance, is a philosophic poem in which the poet makes his all-too-acceptable statements

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life, nature, politics, God, beauty and other such subjects. Govinda Pai wrote two long poems: (1) *Golgotha*, on the last day of Christ's life, and (2) *Vaiśākhi*, on the last day in the life of Buddha as a prince—both inspired by a strong religious feeling and a new didactic purpose. What we find in all these poets is a kind of blending of the old and the new, of the east with the west. Their poetry had the spirit of, say, people like Gokhale and Ranade in politics, those who wanted to retain the best of the old traditions and culture and blend it with the acceptable aspects of western culture. Although they were not rebels or revolutionaries, they paved the way for the emergence of a new rebellious spirit and lent it a sharp dynamism by a dogged maintenance of standards. Romanticism, therefore, had to be not only passionately intense in spirit but also technically self-conscious in artistic virtuosity. The second trend, therefore, helped the central trend of romanticism in gaining strength and profundity, which, left to itself, it could not have done. For example, the long poems in epic strain of poets like Govinda Pai, D. V. Gundappa, Masti Venkatesha Iyengar, K. Narasimhashastri triggered the Romantic epillion of Puttappa's *Citrāṅgade*, and later his great Romantic epic, *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam*. In the field of the lyric, the neo-classicists could at best express the traditional feelings like devotion to God or love of the nation or the pathos of a daughter going to her husband's house. V. Sitaramaiah's *Mane Tumbisuvudu* (Giving away the Daughter, 1933) is typical of the lyrics of these poets:

This one flower grown in our yard
We tender into your gentle hands.
Take this child, the light of our house
She will fill yours with light.

(tr. the author)

V. Sitaramaiah is an interesting poet in the sense that, while he has written poems on love, friendship and the tender bonds between one human being and another, he has also written poems like 'Abhīhī' and 'Kasmai Dēvāya' which show an awareness of the march of mankind over thousands of years and display a fine sense of structure. Masti's sonnet *Śaraṇāgati* (in a form borrowed from English) speaks of complete submission to God:

'The Refuge'

You are my only refuge: the origin
And the end of life are in You—
May this faith underlie all my calculations;
Oh, compassionate One, grant me peace.

(tr. K. Raghavendra Rao)

With Bendre and Puttappa we are on a completely different level, though only now in the perspective of time we see the difference clearly. In them we find a genuine new awareness of social and cultural decay, on the one hand, and, on the other, an awareness of a need to come to terms with it. In both we find an earnest desire for change, but they do not know the real direction in which a change should take place. Both went back to the idea of self-salvation, to the path of mysticism (Aurobindo and A.E. [George William Russell] were Bendre's ideals, whereas Ramakrishna Paramhamsa and Vivekananda were Puttappa's) and their only bonds with the people were lyricism expressing itself in poems on love and nature, their sympathy with the nebulous movements like those for Indian Independence, Karnatak unification and the urgent cause of Mother Kannada, Bendre was the more lyrical of the two, more genuinely poetic, whereas Puttappa was the more ambitious, the more achievement-oriented. Bendre sang lovely songs in delicate folk idiom, whereas Puttappa, cultivated the grand elevated style, highly Sanskritized and highly wrought with self-conscious imagery. After his first rebellious poems of social protest and passionate lyricism, Bendre lapsed into mysticism and effiminate word-play. Puttappa, on the other hand, started shakily, labouring under the influence of English poetry, and then made a virile attempt to soar higher than any of his contemporaries and wrote his Miltonic epic, *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam*.

Bendre's great lyrics in which words and meaning blend with spontaneous naturalness just cannot be translated into any other language. But still we can see their shadows, if not their real selves, in some English translations. Here are a few stanzas from his poem on the lyric—*Bhāvagīta* (The Birth of Song):

Came the rapture of thought, it came riding the back of a bumble-bee;
Wings as keen as whetted winds are whistling a melody
Flashed the faintest lightning of smiles and vanished swooningly!
'Whom to, whom to'—'honey, honey-comb, too'—it mumbles and hums.
More sweet only the tone from the *Om* big conch-shell echoing comes,
Or the enchanting chant of a poet melting till utterance dumbs.
Like to a spider weaving and weaving his web with the thread of his womb
Like to a forehead itself imprinting the linear hints of its doom,
So this thought went plucking and sucking its own full ultimate bloom.
Beauty is standing on tiptoe, her hands are clapping the step of the song,
Strong is the warp and the woof, and from these the complicate web more strong;
Gleams the Infinite's glance with a question:
'How long, O Traveller, how long?'

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Utterance dancing, trancing and turning—churning to white butter of mirth
Even as Love outswells, a-spinning around his own cincture of worth
Self-forgetting, profitless blooms the immortal Song into birth!

(tr. Armando Menezes)

Bendre's early lyrics in *Gari*, *Nādalīle* and *Sakhigīta* mark the highest peak of the *Navōdaya* poetry: not only are they artistically beautiful but they also reflect the general ethos of the period, and it is wrong to say, as some critics do, that Bendre had only an imperfect contact with the culture of the people. Some of his best lyrics have the spontaneity, the verve and the unsophisticated but profound experience of life which characterize folk poetry. In fact few Kannada poets have drawn sustenance from folk poetry as Bendre has done. Bendre's cultural roots were deep and his understanding of the present socio-historical condition was adequate, though what was deficient was his vision of the future. His imperfect romanticism led him to the hazy avenues of mysticism, and his poetry became increasingly esoteric having only a tangential contact with the actuality of life. Bendre's early earthiness disappeared in the forties and the mystic element of his romanticism dominated his later poetry. Sri Aurobindo, Bendre's *guru*, a real romantic, wrote a magnificent epic, *Sāvitri*, whereas Bendre's romanticism produced woolly, pseudo-mystical lyrics like *Gaṅgāvataraṇa* (1951) *Śrīmātā*, (1968), *Nākutanti* (1964, which was awarded the Jnanpith Award) and six or seven other collections. If the later history of Bendre's poetry shows a decline from the highest peak he had attained in the thirties and the forties, K. V. Puttappa's shows a steady development, and he reached his peak in *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam*. The epic, comprising four volumes, running to about 22,300 lines embodies the poet's vision of the flowering of man's personality. The poet has made significant modifications in the story: for example, Rama concedes Vali's arguments; Mantharē is humanized; there is no burning of the city of Lanka; Rama enters the fire after Sita, and both emerge unscathed. His early poetry has in it the spirit of Romantic protest against all social and cultural evils, alongwith the romantic concern for nature, love and patriotism. Although Puttappa's poetic genius was comparatively limited, he made the most of it by sheer hard work and total devotion to poetry. There was not a poetic form that he did not handle and master. Ultimately he fashioned for himself a grand style to suit his epic impulse, and wrote the story of Rama on an unprecedented scale, lending it not only a dimension of his personal philosophy but also a certain socio-cultural relevance. But by the time *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam* came out, Kannada poetry had taken a modernist leap. But this does not detract its significance as one of the high watermarks of Kannada romanticism (which, by the way, won the Jnanpith Award). P. T. Narasimhachar is generally regarded as the third poet of note in this generation. He is the poet of sentiment, the poet who rejoices in the loveliness and joys of nature and earthly life. His is the poetry of exquisite lyricism, the poetry of quietness, not seldom enlivened with an undercurrent of lively enquiry.

When we look back on this great creative age of Kannada poetry, we see a number of other interesting and significant poets. G. P. Rajaratnam (Rājaratnam, 1908–79), with his *Ratnana Padagalu* (The Songs of Ratna, the drunkard), and K. Narasimhaswamy (Narasimhaswāmi, b. 1915) with his *Mysore Mallige*, are two of the most delectable poets of the period who became immensely popular with the growing middle-class readership, since they voiced the characteristic middle-class attitudes and sentiments. Both evinced a mastery of the colloquial idiom, Rajaratnam going one step further by writing poetry in the language of a drunkard. Narasimhaswamy's poetry has shown remarkable development: from the thrill of young love and the joys of domestic life it has extended its sweep to explore complex experiences like time and death. His recent poetry is reminiscent of Ezra Pound's *Cantos*. North Karnataka had a number of poets who worked together for some time under the name 'Geleyara Gumpu', signifying a school devoted to Romantic principles, their leader being Bendre. The most outstanding and the most influential of these poets was 'Vinayaka', i.e. V. K. Gokak (b. 1909). An eminent professor of English, a distinguished alumnus of Oxford, Gokak wielded an influence on at least two or three generations of young writers. Himself a poet, apart from being a novelist and a critic, his commitment was to the principles of high Romanticism. In the poetry which he wrote on his way to England and in England, he freed Kannada poetry from the bonds of rhyme and regularity of rhythm and evolved for the first time what can be called free verse, which, later on, became almost the staple form of modernist poetry. Though romantic in spirit, Gokak was a great experimentalist both in imagery and rhythm and maintains that the central core of modernism is nothing but technical experimentation. Gokak's main contribution to Kannada poetry is the discovery of the vast range of possibilities that Kannada can effectively handle. Thematically, his verse ranges from passionate lyricism to philosophic speculation; and from the point of technique there is no form he has not experimented with—the lyric, the sonnet, the ode, narrative poetry, and varieties of free poetry. Gokak emerged as the pioneer of a new kind of poetry which he christened 'Navya'. Meanwhile, mention must be made of certain younger poets who, even while working in the romantic tradition, were growing restive under the new winds of socialism, communism and other progressive ideologies. The Second World War, the rumblings of which were heard very clearly even in the

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India, would not allow them to cling to romantic dreams of love and glory. Young poets like Chennavir Kanavi (Cannavīra Kanavi, b. 1928) and G. S. Shivarudrappa (Śivarudrappa, b. 1926) wrote competently with inborn artistry, showing a kind of ennui even in the easy mastery of idiom which they had achieved. There were poets like Gopalakrishna Adiga, Gangadhar Chittal and V. G. Bhat who were growing increasingly dissatisfied with the romanticism of the Gandhian era and struggling to find their individual voices to articulate a new consciousness.

Before considering the next phase of Kannada poetry, i.e. the modern phase, which has its distinctive characteristics, it would be profitable to look at the Romantic phase from a generic point of view.

Kannada knew only long narrative or epic poems during the course of its long history, excepting the *Vacanās*, that remarkable form of prose lyric evolved by the Virasaiva saints, and the triplets of 'tripadis' or Sarvagna, which lent themselves more to witty statements than to lyrical utterance. Strictly speaking, the English impact resulted in the birth of the lyric in Kannada. The early lyrics of poets like Govinda Pai and Panje Mangesh Rao are hesitantly 'public' in sentiments and heavy and self-conscious in their use of forms, borrowed from old Kannada, like *Kaṇḍapadya* and *Vṛtta*. (*Kaṇḍapadya* is a four-line stanza and *Vṛitta* is a comprehensive term for several metres.) When Govinda Pai wrote verse without rhyme in 1911 he provoked a storm of protest. It is only after the publication of *Iṅgliṣ Gītagaḷu* that real lyricism, in the sense of more or less natural utterance of personal emotions, came into being. And in a short time of ten years lyricism reached its supreme heights in Bendre and Puttappa. The short lyric is still the staple form of poetry, and at the moment it promises to be more or less the only form of poetry, though its spirit and body have undergone vast transformations.

The Sonnet and the Ode

The other forms that were borrowed from English were the sonnet, the ode, blank verse, the narrative poem ranging from a short story to an epic, and finally, free verse. The first poet to write sonnets was Govinda Pai, who named it *Caturdaśapadi* (14-lined poem). Bendre and Masti Venkatesha Iyengar called it later *Aṣṭaṣaṭpadi* (8–6-lined poem) making use of the name of the old Kannada stanza, *Ṣaṭpadi* (a 6-lined stanza). The sonnet was also called *Sonita*, a term coined to echo the term 'sonnet'. Almost every romantic poet in Kannada has tried his hand at writing sonnets; Masti, Puttappa, P. T. Narasimhachar and Bendre being the best of the earlier generation, and Kanavi being the best of the later generation. It is interesting to note that even before the sonnet established itself in Kannada, an indigenous 12-lined (usually) stanza, called *Sīsapadya*, was used by poets like D. V. Gundappa and later by Bendre. The Kannada sonnet may be looked upon as an extension and modification of the Kannada *Sīsapadya*. The Petrarchan form gave the Kannada sonnet its own patterns and flexibility, and it was widely used by poets for ceremonial purposes with genuine effect. S. Anantanarayan points out in his book on the Influence of English on Kannada Poetry, that the Kannada sonnet equals, and sometimes excels, the English sonnet in its artistry, variety and richness.

The Ode, too, has a notable history in Kannada poetry. Known as 'Pragātha', the ode made its first appearance in the form of the translation of Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark*, done once by Govinda Pai and again by B. M. Srikantaiah. Srikantaiah later wrote a few ceremonial odes on occasions like the Silver Jubilee of Shri Krishna Raj Wodeyar's Coronation and the 600th year of the Vijayanagar Empire. One of the successful regular odes, inspired by Keats, is D. V. Gundappa's *Bēlūrina Śilabalikeyaru* (The Stone-girls of Belur). Equally famous odes are Puttappa's *Gōmatēśwarā* and *Śrī Swātantrōdaya Mahāpragatha*, Masti's *Aruṇa*, Bendre's *O Hāde* and K. S. Narasimhaswamy's *Dominion Janana*.

Thanks to the persistence of royal patronage in the old Mysore state and to the really great national events that took place during the period, the ode performed a useful function in elevating the common sentiments of the Kannada community to the level of myth. In a sense, both the sonnet and the ode had their use in building up the new mythology of the Kannada people.

Blank verse was one of the first forms adopted in Kannada—there was already a form of blank verse in Kannada called *Ragaḷe*—for a variety of purposes like narrative and meditative poetry and poetic drama. The form came in handy for mythological and historical stories —both in narrative and dramatic styles—the revival of which was one of the important trends in the Indian Renaissance. Mention may be made of K. Narasimhashastri's *Sītāparityāga*, *Aśōkavijaya*, *Sohrab and Rustum*, G. Varadaraja Rao's *Obawwa* and G. P. Rajaratnam's *Tāre*.

The most significant evolution of blank verse is to be found in Puttappa, who made use of it for an epillion, *Citrāṅgada*, for narrative poems like *Tānāji*, for poetic plays like *Raktākṣi* (a version of *Hamlet*) and, finally, for the epic, *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam*. It is evident that the greatest creative influence on Puttappa's grand style was Milton. Both *Citrāṅgada* and *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam* are successful experiments in elevating the modern Kannada idiom to an epic level and in lending it a capacity to absorb various levels of experience—from the common to the transcendental, from the trivial to the heroic, from the day-to-day to the extraordinary. The language of *Rāmāyaṇadarśanam* is a proof of the coming of age of Kannada as a poetic medium equal to any other Indian language.

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The achievements of the *Navōdaya* poetry may be summarized as follows: It reflected the spirit of the age—the natural pride of Indians, the optimistic idealism, the values of secular democracy and a sort of universal religion—a belief in the spiritual and the mystical along with faith in universal brotherhood. It brought a new awareness of the self as a unique individual having his own dreams and aspirations. It saw man in a universe of which nature was a significant aspect, recognizing the presence of an immanent spirit and a spiritual bond between man and nature. It experimented with a number of verse forms, generally borrowed from English, and enriched, thereby, the range of Kannada poetry. The most significant contribution was in the fashioning of a new idiom vitalized by its close contact with the living language of the people, but still moving on a heightened level of rhetoric and colour, of enthusiasm and passion.

The *Navōdaya* poetry inevitably provoked a strong reaction among the poets of the new generation who became increasingly aware of the harsh realities that freedom brought in its wake. The disillusionment, alienation and moral perplexity of the post-Independance period gave birth to a new consciousness which demanded for its articulation a new idiom—earthy, cruel, violent, bitter, complex and difficult.

Navya Kāvya

Curiously enough, a seasoned romantic felt the need for a sea-change in Kannada poetry. It was V. K. Gokak, who, thanks to his profound knowledge of English literature, had a prophetic vision of the future. In his famous speech in the Bombay Sahitya Sammelana of 1950, he proclaimed the arrival of what he christened 'Navya Kāvya', a new poetry suited to the needs of the developing country. Language, imagery, rhythm must change, he exhorted, but as far as the spirit was concerned he believed in the continuation of idealism and Romanticism, in the spirit of a nation-builder marching optimistically towards a brighter future. But, in spite of people like Gokak in the cultural field and leaders like Nehru in the political field, the old world of the Gandhian era crumbled like a house of cards, and a new age of power-hunters (not nation-builders) emerged, begetting corruption, nepotism and communalism of the worst kind. The Indian intellectuals who were at the centre of the Freedom Movement in the Gandhian era were ruthlessly pushed to the circumference, and a mood of disillusionment and despair settled on them, forcing them to do some acute questioning of old values and attitudes. Young poets like V. G. Bhat (b.1923), Gaṅgādhar Chiṭṭāla (b. 1923), Pājāwar Sadāśiv Rāo started questioning the concepts of idealism, mysticism, nationalism and sacrifice. Chittala, for example, asked: 'Why should we die for a piece of land calling it mother?' Bhat made fun of the Indian quest for the *Ātman*:

For the whole day I searched
But nowhere did I find it—
The soul my elders spoke of
Nowhere did I find it.

Eureka! Eureka!
The *Ātman* I found
On page number hundred and fifty three
of Kittel's Dictionary.
Hari Om Hara Om, Hari Hara Om Sat.

(tr. S.K.D.)

Pejawar Sadashiv Rao spoke of a new way of life—a life of yielding to new experiences beyond the old traditional cultural norms. On the one hand, there was mocking rejection of old values and, on the other, a restless search for new values. The new age demanded a poet of stature who would undertake to question the old values and search for the new ones in a profoundly serious manner, evolving a new rhetoric, a new language for the purpose. And the age was fortunate in finding such a major poet in Gopalakrishna Adiga (Gōpālakṛṣṇa Aḍiga, b. 1918). Though Adiga's early poetry was written in the tradition of Bendre and Puttappa he soon rebelled against it with a passionate violence. He wrote in his preface to *Nadedu Banda Dari* (The Path Traversed) published in 1952:

'Twentieth-century Kannada poetry has now entered a new phase. The time has already come for a change in the nature and form of poetry. The atmosphere that we had till the attainment of freedom has radically changed. Our spirit, a cloud that had climbed up, is now turned into rain, filling all the cracks and valleys; the dirt and muck that had settled down at the bottom has now come up and muddied the glassy water. The spirit of the nation is yearning for a new ideal, a new vision.... The new sensibility that is growing up must find a new tongue, a new idiom to express itself....From this point of view we have to derive inspiration from modern English poets like Eliot and Auden.'

Adiga, of course, warned against blind imitation and asserted that the new poetry must be related to the atmosphere of our country, to the life of our people, and to the strength and limitations of our own language. The first phase of this new poetry is marked by an ironic and vitriolic attack on society which was becoming increasingly corrupt, hypocritical and destructive. For example, he ironically advises the new generation to

Pull out this plant, nip this little leaf,
crunch that flower.
There's grass, run

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Your faggots through
.....
You have the axe, the sickle, the saw and the knife; go,
harvest all the world with a flourish of your hand....
(tr. A. K. Ramanujan)

In a poem called *Prārthane* (Prayer, 1957) he lashes out against the flatterers, the hirelings, the sissies of modern life and asks God to teach them to live without illusions, facing truth and reality. One of his great poems is on alienation, which became the mood of a generation. *Bhūmigīta* (Earth Song, 1954) looks at the entire panorama of life as an embodiment of senseless absurdity:

Some say they don't know where the switch is;
They have forgotten the address of the head office;
Others insist it must be around here somewhere—
In the darkness, in the blind jammed alley
One must crawl hereafter, groping along the walls;
The blind man rides the lame;
How the path unfolds remains to be seen.
(tr. Michael Garman and
Rajeev Taranath)

The romantic sap in Adiga's poetic self ultimately took him, as it happened with Eliot, to the path of a personal and religious kind of salvation, though, unlike Eliot, he did not lose touch with his 'Waste Land'. Adiga took active part in politics, got defeated in the elections, and later wrote strongly about the agonizing problems of modern life.

In the fifties, when Adiga was still making his voice felt, there were a number of other poets who joined him in a chorus, the foremost of them being Ramachandra Sharma (Rāmacandra Śarma, b. 1925). Sharma spoke, in a new imagistic rhetoric of the elemental human impulses like sex and desire with an almost romantic abandon:

Desire, Desire to weld the body in death
To the ocean's liquid body and to plumb
The depths of the land of shades! To caress
With a wet finger the smooth-walled womb of the sea
And touching the motherbed, to dance
Dance dance Tthaitthakka thakka
Till dancing ends desire.
(tr. A. K. Ramanujan)

Gokak, Adiga and Sharma spurred, in different ways, the younger generation of poets to find for themselves new voices. Gokak and Sharma appealed particularly to the young romantics; and poets like Chennavira Kanavi and G. S. Shivarudrappa, who were writing in the old Bendre-Puttappa tradition, changed their idiom, and the idiom, in its turn, changed their sensibility. They now became more realistic and ironic and socially critical. Shivarudrappa, for instance, bewails the condition of the new man in *Ivanu* (This Man) thus:

Circuses, movies, restaurants,
Acrobatic shows,
Cigarettes, cards, snake-charming
Feats, poetry circles, and the high-falutin
Of endless talks,
All that feast of myth and legend:
These and such as these,
Are placebos for his pain. (tr.)

In such circumstances, human relationships are becoming difficult:

There is always wind, rain
And slush between us;
The poles of the power-lines
Are uprooted,
The bridge has collapsed.... (tr.)

Chennavira Kanavi is acutely aware of the two banks of the river, but his romantic soul enjoys sailing smoothly between the two banks:

Between the two banks, the smooth sail of boats;
The fish sink and flash; in the far background,
a row of blue hills
(tr. K. Raghavendra Rao)

But Gopalkrishna Adiga's poetry was more in keeping with the new ethos of the country, and under his revolutionary and creative influence grew up a new generation of poets, more original, more experimental, more alienated than either Kanavi or Shivarudrappa. Gangadhar Chittala, for instance, developed on his own, writing highly contemplative poetry exploring the basic human predicament in terms of sex, love, fulfilment, time and death; Chandrashekhar Kambar (b. 1938) brought earthy sensuousness into poetry through his uncanny mastery of the folk idiom. Chandraśekhar Patil (Candraśēkhara Pāṭīl, b. 1939) whetted his native irony and made it a merciless and sharp instrument tearing everything into pieces and later, under stress, burgeoning into a possible poet of social commitment. Chennaiah and Siddhalinga Pattanashetti explored physical sex in all its tangled aspects. P. Lankesh (Laṅkēś, b. 1935) wrote poetry in a completely new way—bringing the idiom nearer prose, making poetry more inclusive than ever. His poem, *Mother*, is a fine example of this new kind of poetry:

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My mother, black prolific earth,
green leaf, a festival of white flowers.
With every burn, the earthier; with every pang
more fruit and petal.
Limbs that thrill to children's kicks
Laying down the basket on her head,
She groaned, and closed eyes never again to open.

* * *

A wild bear
bearing a litter of little ones,
she reared a husband, saved coins
in knots of cloth; like a hurt bitch,
she snarled, grumbled and fought.

Mean, crooked, ready to scratch
like a monkey;
the only rule:
whatever raises a family
would flare up and burn
only if a son went wild
or husband elsewhere.

A wild jungle bear has no need for your Gita.
My mother lived
for stick and grain, labour and babies;
for rafter overhead, rice, bread, a blanket;
to walk upright among equals.

Admiration, tears of thanks:
for bearing and raising;
living in mud and soil, and
for leaving home for the fields,
cool, in the middle of small talk.

(tr. A. K. Ramanujan)

The poem exemplifies, most effectively, the 'central' mood of the seventies—a mood characterized by a healthy attitude of looking at things in a direct, unsentimental and inclusive manner, a new spiritual confidence in grappling with the complexities of reality, and a new social awareness which throbs with indignation and bitterness without losing its capacity to thrill to the essential humanity underlying any social structure in spite of its inevitable cruelties and suppressions. The seventies have seen, inevitably, the rise of the poetry of social commitment, of *Dalit* or *Śūdra* poetry. If the poetry of the sixties was characterized by the exploration of the self, inevitably degenerating into a love of the absurd or nihilism, the poetry of the seventies is trying to scale the opposite heights of social revolution. The passage from the 'voyage within' to the 'voyage without' is the inevitable outcome of social and cultural dialectics. What is to be noted is that the modernism of the fifties and the sixties with its cultural pessimism engendered a mood of anger, which, at the moment, is rightly directed towards social ills or the very structure of society which generates these ills. Anger is a positive emotion, essentially action-oriented and more dynamic than despair and anxiety. But anger does not have the subtleties of vision that only despair or anxiety can give. Anger very often degenerates into simplistic forms of satire and irony or sometimes into senseless but witty abuse.

In the seventies there are two basically opposed trends—the modernist and the post-modernist. The modernist trend is itself split into two recognizable tendencies: first, the ironic, subtle, mocking, absurdist exploration of experience. This tendency is represented by new poets like K. V. Tirumalesh (Tirumalēś, b. 1948) and B. R. Laxmanrao (Lakṣmaṇa Rāv, b. 1946), who are excellent craftsmen working with a subtilized idiom, turning their non-involved, smiling, mocking eyes on objects of immediate experience. The second tendency is characterized by a neutral, objective, imagistic, direct representation of individual vision. A. K. Ramanujan (Rāmānujan, b. 1929), who is also a well-known Indian poet in English, writes this kind of poetry producing highly sophisticated linguistic constructs. His uniquely cultivated sensibility, sharpened by his sense of alienation (he lives in the U.S.A.), creates, out of remembered past, poems of exquisite beauty:

Father gave me
while I was still a child, a little
umbrella and a watch.

He was six feet tall
and his umbrella would be
two or three feet above him.
So when I, a three-foot
dwarf,
walked by his side in rain,
my body would all be wet and muddy.
While going
my left side would be wet, while coming
my right side.
His creaking chappals
would raise at every step a spray of mud
from top to toe.

(tr. S. K. Desai)

Ramanujan is evidently a poet's poet. Though there are few writers writing with his sophistication, subtlety and objectivity, his linguistic experiments have been absorbed both by the 'absurdist' moderns and the socially committed writers. Committed poetry is trying to capture the central position, but has not so far, because it lacks a poet of genuine stature who would transform the sensibility of a generation through sheer passionate honesty of vision and

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felt inclusiveness of sensibility—the way Adiga did in the fifties.

At the moment, if we look at the Kannada poetic scene from very close quarters forsaking our vantage point of a broad framework, we see very interesting things happening. There are, on the one hand, the old romantics still trying to embody a cosmic vision. There are, on the other, older moderns like Gopalakrishna Adiga, Ramachandra Sharma and A. K. Ramanujan, maturing in their vision and expression. The 'bridge-poets' like Chennavir Kanavi, G. S. Shivarudrappa, Nissar Ahmed and Chandrasekhar Kambar are writing extremely competent poetry. The younger moderns like Sumateendra Nadig, Tirumalesh, B. R. Laxmanrao and Jayant Kaikini are growing in sophistication and subtlety. Then there are a number of young rebels like Chandrasekhar Patil, Buddanna Hingamire and Siddhalingayya who are trying to bring new social tensions into Kannada poetry. There are at least a dozen good poets who are trying to seek their individual identity and to fashion their own individual idioms, all, more or less, left-wing, socially conscious and philosophically uncertain poets.

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Kashmiri

P. N. PUSHP

Background

Modern trends reached Kashmir rather later than it did many other parts of the country. Even the events of 1857 did not have any impact on subsequent Kashmiri verse, nor did Kashmiris feel any revolution round the corner. What, however, agitated their minds was their helplessness, pathetic undertones of which were sometimes heard (or overheard) in popular verse satires called *Laḍīśah*, that often appeared in the garb of a limerick or lampoon. Written poetry of the post-1857 period seriously preoccupied itself with only quasi-mystical variations on the theme of love—mundane as well as mystical.

The socio-political concern of the times, nevertheless, occasionally peeped through the mystical exterior of the verse written during the 19th century. The earliest docu-

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mentation of such an oblique device is preserved in the *Mānch-tulur Ta Grīstybāy* (Honey-bee and Peasant-woman), a ballad reminiscent of the Afghan excesses in Kashmir towards the close of the 18th century. The avaricious governors deputed by the Kabul Government had impoverished the Kashmiri peasant and driven him to extreme exasperation. The honey-bee of the ballad confides her woes to the peasant-woman and refers to the callous way in which the uncouth bear had forcibly taken away all her honey. The peasant-woman, in turn, recounts the harrowing tale of how she has been driven into the far-off woods by unrelenting tax-gatherers who had left not a grain of paddy for her household.

Similar concern for the people's weal and woe is reflected by Hakim Mulla Habibullah (1848–1905) in his *Sana Śaeṭhuk Sālāb* (Flood of the Year 60, i.e. Vikrama Era 1960, i.e. A.D. 1903). This is clear from such telling comments as:

> One person's *mār* (ruin) is the *kār* (benefit) of another....
> Officials? Ah, what stake had they?
> Many a person fled, many were drowned, and many perished....
> Peasants prospered, city-dwellers suffered. (tr).

There are veiled references to people's yearning for freedom in some narrative poems of the early 20th century, particularly in Wahāb Parey's Kashmiri versions of Firdusi's *Śāhnāma* and Hamīdullāh Śāhabādī's *Akbarnāma*. Rendered from the Persian originals, these *masnavīs* of Wahāb Parey (1846–1914) apparently depict Iranian and Afghan national struggles for self-assertion, but some portions cleverly imply local aspirations too.

Around the same period, Maqbūl Krālavārī (?–1876) caricatures in verse the peasantry as well as the revenue officials; the former for their indifference to the *Pīr* (the Muslim priest) and the latter for the awesome regard they received from the panicky peasant despite their unscrupulous treatment of the peasantry.

But very few poets after Maqbul and Wahab pursued the line adopted by them. Even the religio-social reform movements sponsored by the 'Anjuman-e-Nusrat ul Islam' and the 'Ārya Samāj' in Kashmir did not evoke any appreciable response in Kashmiri verse except for a plaint or two addressed to patron saints pleading for redress. The 'Anjuman' and the 'Samaj' had respectively patronised Urdu and Hindi rather than the mother tongue of the people in whose name they professed to speak. Similar was the attitude of the Theosophical Society (in Kashmir) which, despite its eagerness to introduce Kashmiri as the medium of instruction at the primary stage, helplessly carried on its deliberations in English. Finding no access to any forum of modernity, the Kashmiri language, thus, continued to be the preserve of the traditionalist.

An early attempt at verse on social reform was made by Daya Ram Ganju (?–1946) in his *Gara-vyaz Māl* (Garland of Household Ethics), which was addressed to the girls of his community. Non-sectarian treatment of socio-economic themes, stirred by a patriotic consciousness, did not, however, materialize in Kashmiri verse before the thirties of the 20th century, when Mahjūr sang of Kashmir's loveliness and, while doing so, complained of the Kashmiri's age-long apathy to his own land of birth:

> The *bulbul* (nightingale) dotes on *gul* (the flower);
> the *bombur* (bumble-bee) on *yembarzal* (the narcissus);
> Kashmiri, deep-drunk, is self-absorbed. (tr.)

Transitional Interlude

Mahjur's Pioneering Endeavour. The transitional interlude ushering in the modern period in Kashmiri verse actually starts with the verse of Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur (1885–1952). He had, before 1918, composed verse in Persian and tried his hand at Urdu verse also, but while in Lahore, he was fortunately advised by the celebrated Urdu poet Iqbal not to pursue Persian and Urdu in preference to his mother tongue. Inspired initially by a *vatsun* of Haba Khotan (c. 1560), he was later influenced by the lyrical earthiness of Rasul Mir (?–1879) and the romantic pathos of Maqbul (? c. 1875).

Mahjur was, in fact, the first Kashmiri poet to steer clear of Sufistic jargon and the far-fetched mysticism made respectable by some senior contemporaries of his, particularly Azīzullah Haqqānī (1854–1918). He chose, instead, to sing of love in the inter-related contexts of nature, man and society. His *Grīstikūr* (Peasant Lass), romanticizes the uninhibited liveliness of the farm-girl in contradistinction to the aristocratic effeteness of closed-door comforts, and clearly indicates the new direction of his poetic sensibility. The poem, in a way, explores the neo-romantic possibilities of the human situation in a realistic setting. It was this poem in the traditional *vatsun* form that won Mahjur the admiration of Tagore. Gurudeva's appreciation, in fact, boosted Mahjur's self-confidence and endorsed the validity of the advice offered him by Iqbal.

Mahjur soon felt the need to reorient such conventional symbols as *gul* and *bulbul* or *bombur* and *yembarzal*, and to evolve a new symbolism worthy of the urges awakened by the people's struggle for freedom. Initially he used this symbolism as a safety-device against incarceration by feudal autocracy; but in due course his assertions grew bolder and bolder, even within the cautious bounds of disarming symbolism. Here, for instance, is a mild exclamation:

> Wake up early enough, O flower of the park;
> Listen to the nightingale. (tr.)

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This was years before he invited the gardener to usher in 'the glory of a new spring'; for, bemoaned the poet:

The garden lies desolate
the dew is shedding tears;
Flowers, tunic-torn, are ill at ease. (tr.)

He, therefore, sang of the need to

Bring about an earthquake,
kick up the wind,
thunder aloud, let loose a flood. (tr.)

These boisterous lines were, however, tamed later by less noisy assertions like:

Winter will flee, of course; snow will melt away;
Once again would come the spring.
Mahjur, out with your love-symphony.
Flowers will bloom on their own,
you just be a cause. (tr.)

Alongside this preoccupation with socio-political concern, Mahjur continued to compose lyrics both in the *vatuan* and *ghazal* patterns, and (as he himself put it):

Ghazals of Mahjur conjured up fresh tunes on the harp of love. (tr.)

Some of these *ghazals* are vibrant with sensuous touches like:

As soon as a breeze flirtingly left beauty ruffled,
A furore registered in the tremble of tresses. (tr.)

An early *ghazal* of his had already struck a fresh note as in:

Fain would I move out and look for my beloved;...
Fondly would I tighten up the harp of love.....
I would wait and watch
just like a lotus on the lake. (tr.)

Mahjur's Young Contemporaries. Significantly enough, Mahjur was the first Kashmiri poet to attract the attention of youngsters who had received any regular schooling of the modern type. While Mahjur's schooling was confined to the conservative study of the Persian classics and a smattering of Urdu verse, his younger contemporary Abdul Ahad Azad (1906–48) had not only attended Government schools but had also passed university examinations in Persian as well as Urdu language and literature.

Very few Kashmiri poets (up to the mid-thirties) had ever gone beyond the school stage. The first Kashmiri poet to enter college was Ghulam Ahmad Fazil Kashmiri (b. 1914). He was followed by Nand Lal Ambārdār (1915–73). Both these poets benefited a great deal from their nodding acquaintance with English verse (though mostly of textbook variety) and Urdu verse that appeared in literary periodicals. Hence the imprint of romanticism on their treatment of love and loveliness as well as nature-depiction. But while Fazil composed *nāṭ* and other types of devotional verses also, Ambārdār kept within the romantic ambit. Fazil's *Krālakūr* (Potter Lass), in facile folk-form, became extremely popular, while Ambardar's *Rūpavat* (Beauty Incarnate), deliberately modelled by him 'after the style of De la Mare' despite its rich local colour, remained almost unnoticed, probably because of its stylistic departure. Both, however, wrote a few poems specially for children.

Dina Nath Wali Almast (b. 1910), another young contemporary of Mahjur, attended a technical institute and qualified as a painter. He invariably dealt with rustic themes, mostly in the *vatsun* form. Yet, occasionally he reflected new urges and aspirations also within that very frame, working out variations of a romantic approach to rustic innocence against the backdrop of natural scenery, as in *Guhy-khar* (Cowdung-Gathering Lass).

Strangely enough, unlike Mahjur and Azad, none of these three younger poets ever deviated from the romantic line, even when they wrote on such themes as famine, economic exploitation, communal harmony and religious tolerance.

Azad's Clarion Call. Azad, on the other hand, became amazingly outspoken in his utterances after years of infatuation with the Sufistic *vatsun* and *ghazal*. A great admirer of Mahjur, he switched, in time, to socio-cultural themes, without once turning back to the traditional *līla-vatsun* (love-lyric). His study of Urdu literature had given him some idea of the changing perspectives in Urdu poetry, and he was inspired to do something similar with Kashmiri verse. Later, his growing interest in M. N. Roy's 'Radical Humanism', which opened up new vistas for him, caused his poetic sensibility to adopt humanism as a creed.

His *Sikwa e Iblīs* (Satan's Plaint) and *Loel Ta Gāṭajār* (Love and Intellect), among other poems that show similar concern for contemporary reality, reveal the deep impact Iqbal had on him, yet his humanism refused to be circumscribed by any sort of religious exclusiveness or communal primacy. His entire verse, accordingly, became a voice of protest, articulating a mighty crusade against all types of narrowness, religious as well as social, national as well as international. Denunciation of anti-social elements naturally became almost an obsession with him; for, according to him, 'The light of the candle is for all, Hindu or Mussalman'.

Having known abject poverty at home and abroad, Azad had lost faith not only in the prevailing social set-up but even in God (who 'would not be wooed by empty-handed entreaty'). So he longed for revolution.

Revolution actually seemed to have come in 1947, but

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before fully relishing its fruit Azad passed away (in 1948). Had he lived a few years more, his poetry would have become richer in contemporaneity and finer in dictional appropriateness, judging by the promise shown in his *Daryāv* (River):

I corrode away the hilly hearts,
such is the power of my flow;
I bathe the bodies of the sweet,
such is the softness of my ways.
My curves and turns are full of love aflame;
I get the music of longing in travel and wandering....

Midst the flowers and the birds
I play upon the sweet *santūr*;
When I notice these ups and downs,
these curves and dykes,
I grow restive,
I seek oneness and equity;
For that I run and foam and fret. (tr.)

Other Voices of Freedom

The people's movement for freedom similarly inspired not only younger talents like Kāfūr, Fānī, Āsī and Ārif, but also an elderly mystic like Masterji.

Shamdas Din Kafur (1905–73), Pitambar Nath Dhar Fani (b. 1919) and Abdus Sattar Asi (b. 1951) voiced the woes of toiling peasants and labourers. Mirza Ghulam Hasan Beg Arif (b. 1910) sang the saga of the 'Quit Kashmir' campaign (launched in 1946 against the Dogra autocracy), and his *Magar Kārvān Soen*... (Yet Our Caravan Dashed Ahead) presents, in marching cadences befitting the theme, a pageant of Kashmir's struggle for freedom, right from its beginning in 1931 up to the dawn of Independence. His indignation (over the vested interests' machinations to suppress the people's resistance) burst forth into a fiery fulmination:

My banner is gory, my robe is soaked in blood;
Tyranny and fraud have made me wide awake.
The sky teaches me rightful vengeance;
Lightning is my laughter,
thunder, my challenge. (tr.)

Zinda Kaul Masterji (1886–1966) sang not only of eternal longing and interrogation in appropriately simple yet substantially modern tones, but also of a better, happier and lovelier world where domestic, communal, national and international demands of life are harmoniously integrated. He also made bold to expose sham and hypocrisy that thrived in the name of 'godliness'. According to him

God to them a tyrant is;
worship, just a safety-valve;
In case He really be,
won't He wreak vengeance? (tr.)

He envisioned the heart as

just a love-sea bubble
encapsuling yet a tempest of ardour. (tr.)

and reflected:

Man would weep, would not gulp tears;
what use weeping did he find?
Knowing no one heeds
why itch for voicing grievances?
Why shoot arrows into the void?
why dash the head against the rock!
Love is just incorrigible,
Beauty knows no compassion.
compulsion, ah helplessness! (tr.)

That some mystic poets like Samad Mir (1894–1959) and Ahad Zargar (b. 1908) apparently managed to black out the socio-political compulsions of the times, is due to the old and the new coexisting in harmony. Another poet who managed to remain unaffected by the 'present' was Rasa Javidani (1901–79). He wrote *ghazal* after *ghazal* in the tradition of Rasul Mir and, despite his Persianized diction, showed consummate skill in adapting the Persian conceit to the local needs as, for instance, in the following lines:

Asked he: 'What would you consecrate to me?'
'My youth', said I.
Asked he: 'What shall remain with you?'
'Life, indeed,' said I. (tr.)

Independence and After

Fall Out of 1947 Euphoria (1947–51). On the eve of Partition, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was plunged into a grave crisis owing to tribal raids from Pakistan territory. As Mahjur put it: 'The man-eating wild vultures swooped down on our lovely land.' The heroic resistance that was offered by the people in this moment of peril became an obsession with the Kashmiri poets, young and old, including those like Almast, Fazil, Ambardar and Ghulam Nabi Āriz (1816–65) who had for decades concentrated on romantic themes. The event, in a way, galvanised all that was noble in Kashmir's literary and artistic traditions and gave a fillip to new trends struggling for expression.

Dina Nāth Kaul Nādim (b. 1916) was one of the foremost organizers of the new cultural movement. He wrote a number of inspiring songs and poems in chaste and

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simple Kashmiri. *Vuśun Vuśun Vozul Vozul*....(Warm and Red, My Blood), *Vāvan Vonanam* (The Wind Said It to Me) and *Vothi Bāguc Kukilī*...(Arise, O My Garden-Dove) are surcharged with the youthful muse of valiant resistance.

Nadim explored the possibilities of a number of genres and styles, including the sonnet, opera, lullaby and folk-chant. One of his chants, addressed to the eminent saint of Kashmir who is popularly known as Shah-e-Hamdan, is a fine piece of poignant irony, which may be rendered as:

O Shah e Hamdan, O Shah e Hamdan,
Are we also human beings?
Who says we are?
Winter, imminent; pockets, empty;
cottage, roofless.
That too may be confiscated.
O Shah e Hamdan, O Shah e Hamdan. (tr.)

The most outstanding contribution by Nadim, however, was a meaningful break from the traditional verse technique of *ghazal* as well as *nazam* as perfected by Mahjur and Azad. Nadim's was, in fact, the first experiment with 'free verse' suited to the new themes he sought to treat. His *Vāvan vonanam*, for instance, is an indignant condemnation of the vested interests that tried to exploit the Kashmir situation to their advantage. Having come all the way 'over hills and rocks, across the fields and lakes', and having chatted with mountains and forests throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir, *Vāv* (the Wind) recounts 'his' impressions of the people's resistance to outside interference. The Wind also voices the uneasy feeling of suspense and insecurity aroused by the Security Council's indecision *vis-a-vis* the future of Kashmir. Nadim's advocacy of peace was, therefore, no sentimental sop, but a genuine articulation of the people's grave concern. His anguish was personal as well as inter-personal:

I will not sing today
any sonorous, sweet and soothing song
of flower or the nightingale
nor any verdant song of dew;
For, today
the venomous breath of autumn
drives the vernal breeze away,
And man is seen preparing sharp
to prey on man again. (tr.)

Symbols of Spring and Autumn along with their respective allies, were later employed with dramatic effect by the poet in such operatic compositions as *Bombur-Tambarzal* (Bumble-Bee and Narcissus). His emphasis, invariably, was on the roles the worker and the peasant were 'destined' to play in the gigantic task of reordering society. According to him, the peasant who

with ploughshare every year
writes a new destiny on Mother Earth's brow,

had to

reclaim the wounded earth
remove the frowning furrows from her brow
wrinkles from her face
and cataract from her eye. (tr.)

One of the chief attractions of Nadim's verse is his imagery which is, by and large, off-beat, like the following:

A cloudlet has drifted along with the moon,
a stale chunk of thickened rice porridge
carried by a beggar maid
in the fringed corner of her head-kerchief...

* * *

Moon: a pancake eyed by hungry folks....
a hole in the collar-band
through which peep out the scars
of a marble breast....

A couple locked in embrace
close as thirst to a water-fount. (tr.)

Nadim was joined by a zestful band of new poets, such as Roshan, Rāhī, Kāmil, Majbūr, Firāq and Premi. Almast, Fazil, Ambardar and Ariz also were attracted by the 'new,' the apparently non-romantic. Even Abdul Sattār Ranjūr, (b. 1917) switched from the devoutly religious to the avowedly revolutionary. Only a few poets, like Lāla Lakhyman (1893–1961), Rasa Javidani, Mohi-ud-Din Nawaz (b. 1926) and Amar Chand Wali (1894-1970), stuck to the traditional. Lala Lakhyman wrote satiric ballads, while the other three wrote the romantic *ghazal*.

Fascination for proletarian themes led to a craze for folk-forms, such as harvest choruses, cradle songs, lullabies and labour chants.

Nur Muhammad Roshan (b. 1919) wrote a number of verse-fantasies on the picturesque seasons of Kashmir. In these, the common man pursues his multifarious activities while on his way to 'a new world of plenty'. Prem Nath Premi (b. 1926) portrayed men and women weeding fields, planting seedlings, reaping crops, picking saffron-filaments and plying the spinning-wheel. Particularly remarkable is his *Harud* (Harvest), a dance-song throbbing with the fervour of an optimistic peasantry in the process of transition. Arif wrote moving poems, like the *Dusa* (Kashmir Shawl) and *Bānahajbāl* (Banahal Mountain), which highlight the sad plight of the exploited and the dispossessed.

But the euphoria did not last long. Almost all the poets

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who had acclaimed the 'dawn of a new order' promised by the New Kashmir Manifesto, were soon faced with frustration and disillusionment.

Disillusionment (1951–65) and Groping (1965–71)

Mahjur's Satire. As early as 1951, the rising expectations of the Kashmiris were shaken by the hard realities of economic rigours and administrative helplessness. Even the optimistic Mahjur, who had sung of the shape of things to come in 'New Kashmir', was perplexed by the turn events were taking and that too, to the utter dismay of the common man. His *Lālo Lālo* (Tulip, O Tulip), despite its guarded metaphor, is replete with disgust and indignation over the gap between administrative promise and performance. The poet's tone is bolder still in *Āzādī* (Freedom), particularly when it caricatures newly-won freedom as a forbidden beauty:

This Dame Freedom is a heavenly nymph,
should she then move from door to door?
Nay, nay; she dallies forth
in just a house or two....

People are engulfed in grief
and rulers, bridegroom-like,
engage this Dame Freedom
in amorous privacy at home. (tr.)

Arif's Rubai. It was at this very juncture that Arif, the bard of 'Quit Kashmir', came forth with his *rubāī* (quatrain) that bristles with bitter irony and frank comment on the persisting vestiges of the old order which, he felt, 'had only been pruned'. The poet bemoaned:

Poor man gets a bullet, bread eludes his grasp;
Even freedom leaves him unredeemed.
Sheep-like he submits to those that kill;
Butcher alone has changed, the cut is as it used to be.
(tr.)

Roshan's Sarcasm. In one of Roshan's poems a martyr's grieved mother exposes the hypocrites who every year flock to her son's grave and ostentatiously shower flowers of 'tribute' over it. She complains to the undying spirit of her son that the hypocrites

have betrayed the cause of freedom
leaving the fight halfway,
and comfortably rest their backs
against the pillows of an archaic system. (tr.)

Second Thoughts of Rahi and Kamil. Despite their disillusionment, Nadim, Roshan and Majbur continued writing about the 'hopeful morrow'. But Rahi and Kamil, two outstanding associates of theirs in the Cultural Congress, had second thoughts about the validity of the futuristic assertion. Both, like Nadim, had switched to Kashmiri from Urdu language and both were influenced by new Urdu verse, especially that of Faiz and Firaq.

Rahman Rahi (b. 1925) openly admitted the shallowness of the views he had expressed earlier and grew more and more reflective. He also stole a march over his senior contemporaries in artistic appeal. To begin with he mainly wrote *ghazals*, but later he concentrated on the *nazam*, to which Mahjur, Azad and even Masterji had already given a socio-political flavour. His major collection of poems, *Navroz e Sabā* (Muse at Early Dawn) is not only the climax of Kashmiri verse written before him but is also a watershed between neo-traditional modernity and non-traditional contemporaneity. He has today travelled so far from his poetic fancy of the early fifties that he has little compunction in blacking out his 'progressive' verse, including the bulk of his *Navroz e Sabā*. His present preoccupation with 'ambiguity' and fondness for 'obscurity' are a direct outcome of his serious experiments not only with free verse and monologue, but also with the communication of poetic sensibility reflecting the human predicament.

Three outstanding poems of his, composed during the period of early experimentation, are *Pay Chu Zulmāta Vuzāt* (Clue Comes up from Dark Below), *Qāri Daryā Salsabil* (Heavenly is the Surging Sea) and *Jalva Ta Zabūr* (Vision and Word), which sparkle with lines like these:

No houri she, nor a fairy, no swallow, nor a dove.
She's just human: one among the many
Whose tresses curl up with innocent vivacity
Whose eyelids reflect love oozing up
from the bottom of the heart.
(tr. from *Jalva ta Zabūr*)

Rose is your breath, wine, your eyes.
Ah, the interrogative heart!
(tr. from *Qāri Daryā Salsabil*)

Amin Kamil (b. 1923) made a spectacular poetic start writing *ghazal* and *nazam* in the style of Iqbal. His first collection, *Mas-Malar* (Waves of Wine), despite its derivative configuration of theme and diction, included some pieces of superior poetic craft also. But it did not take him long to emerge from the spell of Iqbalian rhetoric and experiment with the Kashmiri *ghazal* in the manner Firaq Gorakhpori had done with the Urdu. His *Lava Ta Prun* (Dew drops and Sunrays), as a consequence, proved to be a real landmark, while his *Beyi Suy Pān Panun* (My Own Self Again) indicated the further possibilities of the *ghazal* voicing such human predicament as:

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A terrific flare up this, O Lord:
The whole town is ablaze;
Intellect, all afire,
If and but, aflame. (tr.)

Among his poems of this period are *Zakhmī Butā* (Wounded Ego) and *Sirsāy Śahar* (Circean City), both of which articulate this predicament effectively. In the former he refers to the 'cankerous agony of expression', while in the latter he calmly watches 'path nibbling at path' and reveals the paradoxical circumstance:

Blow a conch on your way to *Prayāg*
Reaching the other end
you'll surely see *Kāba*. (tr.)

Rahi's and Kamil's departure from Nadimian preoccupation with the propagative (howsoever progressive it was intended to be) became more and more marked. Even Nadim had to make an occasional foray into this nonconformist articulation of the contemporary. This he did in his sonnets and free associational verse.

Other Voices. Notwithstanding the tremendous impact of these three trend-setters on the younger poets, quite a few, such as Nazki, Firaq, Khayal, Azim, Chaman and Santosh, were able to have their individual voices recognized.

Ghulam Rasul Nazki, (b. 1909), an Urdu poet of long standing, all of a sudden took to Kashmiri verse also and wrote *Namrūd-Nāma* (Verse Reflecting Ways of Namrud). This collection comprises 200 pithy four-line verses that are a sort of running commentary on men and manners under various thematic categories such as:

The scar on the brow, zestful reverence for the Faith,
The heart's ardour, fondness for Medina,
The Navroz Festival of the breast,
Tales of the times, anecdotes of the chums. (tr.)

Ghulam Nabi Firaq (b. 1922) tapped the resources of such English romantics as Keats, some of whose poems (particularly the Odes) he has rendered into Kashmiri. His *ghazal* also bears the neo-Romantic impact.

Ghulam Nabi Khayal (b. 1936), poured out the agony of hoping against hope, for liberation from the dehumanising shackles of conventions. Muzaffar Azim (b. 1934) undertook to reflect the smiles and tears of life in contemporary situations without introducing any idealistic overtones. Chaman Lal Chaman (b. 1937) waxed eloquent on the ironies of the Freudian vagaries of the libido in the frustrating context of today's Kashmir.

Ghulam Rasul Santosh (b. 1929), a celebrated artist, who has also turned out prolific verse in various styles, is essentially fascinated by what he prefers to call the *tantra* reality. Besides writing *ghazals* and *nazams* he has tried his hand not only at the sonnet but also at the *Bahar e Tavil* (Muse in Droll Metre). In the initial unit of this lengthy poem, under the letter 'Alif' (Alpha), he has spun a mystical juxtaposition of *Om* and Allah, in an attempt to integrate various mystic experiences.

1971 and After

By 1971, the process of disillusionment with the poetic validity of advocating noble causes was almost complete. Kashmiri poets now felt the need to probe deeper into the levels of reality and explore the finer modes of articulation. Here again, Nadim was the first to venture into unsuspected regions of poetic possibilities, experimenting with poetry of absurd relevance. Remarkable from this point of view are his *Lakhci Chu Lakhcun* (Lakhchi has a Mole), *Nābad ta Ṭeṭhaven* (Candy and Artemisia), *Rātuky Tre Pahar* (Three Stages of the Night), *Hārysāt* (Vicissitudes), *Lafzan Kam Kam Māni Valav* (With What Variety of Meanings Shall We Cover the words?) and *Cāry-kath* (Absurd Talk). A telling example of his work of this period is:

Ascending, up he went; growing, fat he grew.
Good Heavens, so many arms and legs!
Crack, crack.
Profuse lucre gained; hoo hoo hoo.
Liberal handfuls doled, Allah Hū.
Prancing round, shrony shrony shrony.
The steed turned back, thud thud thud.
A bluish steed, magnificent, restive and agile;
thud thud thud.
Right and left, waving two hands,
A manikin, *Juma Gād*, restless, phar phar phar.

Juma Gād is distressed, *Juma Gād* is undone;
Dwarfed and shrunk, exhausted, gone.
Allah Hū, phar phar phar.

(tr. from *Cāry-kath*)

Rahi is undoubtedly, the most outstanding representative of the muse of the 'New Sensibility' that insists on total rejection of overstatement and rejoices in, what he terms, *ibahām* (ambiguity). Rahi's poetic concern mainly seems to be the communication of the suggestive image of the non-obvious through the creative morphosyntax of the 'word'. This concern of his is evident in *Takhlīq* (Creation), *Reh Ta Raqs* (Flame and Dance), *Hand-i-Foenūs* (Dandelion Balloon) and *Toera Phīrith* (Having Returned from Over There).

Takhlīq, for instance, takes the reader into the innermost recesses of creative experience:

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What wizard this, O Lord, bewitching me!
Arms are daisy-soft;
Movement spider-like on cobweb track;
Frisking for a while, a roe;
Panting another moment, tigerly....

How deep and dark a cave is this!
Ah whereat have I arrived?
Have I to sip this fiery fount? (tr.)

Toera Phīrith, on the other hand, conjures up a breathtaking interplay of tantalising vagaries:

How dare I look for those eyes?
Wow wow, pich pich, run run.

Hunters are atrot.
Confounded, frightened, naked dance.
No lightning flash, no palanquin.
Mad rush kicked up thick clouds of dust,
Corners of the lips athrob with blossom smile:
Pigeons coming out of their attic.
No tree, no hill, no soil, no breeze;
and horizon, none. (tr.)

Kamil undertook to liberate the *ghazal* from the clutches of conventional jargon so as to turn it into an effective instrument of new poetic communication. His diction in his recent *ghazals* is appropriately terse and telling, as may be seen in this example:

Roofs afire, walls ashake, rooms ablaze;
House after house aflame; every eye ascar.... (tr.)

Almost all the poets of the sixties, except the 'funmakers' such as Khizar Maghribī (b. 1921) and Makhan Lal Mahav (b. 1926) (who write mainly to make their readers laugh), have been trying their hand at this new mode of poetic communication. Among those earnestly exploring the new possibilities of poetic expression are Moti Lāl Sāqī (b. 1936), Ghulam Nabi Gauhar (b. 1934), Ghulam Ahmad Gāsh (b. 1940), Vāsder Reh (b. 1926), Makhan Lal Bekas (b. 1939), Rasul Pompur (b. 1939), Marghūb Bānahālī (b. 1937), Nāzir Kulgāmī, Shambhoo Nāth Bhāṭ Halīm (b. 1921), Rashīd Nājkī (b. 1931), Nājī Munawwar (b. 1932), Mash-al Sultanpuri (b. 1936), Moti Lāl Nāz (b. 1937) and Mohi ud Din Gauhar (b. 1941).

A striking point of departure in modern Kashmiri verse is the existential recognition of the 'moment' as a dynamic reality more relevant than the static 'past' or the potential 'future'. This, in fact, is a recurrent theme in a number of poems like those included in the *Lagahār Tsyuh* (Moment Relevant) of P. N. Pushp (b. 1917).

The most serious response to the new demands of poetic articulation, however, is that of poets born in the post-Independence era. Like Nadim, Rahi and Kamil, some of these younger poets have also been keeping abreast of not only the latest poetry in Urdu and/or Hindi, but also of the present-day currents and cross-currents in literary appreciation. Even a nodding acquaintance with the literary legacy left by Eliot, Camus and Sartre, among other trend-setters of the modern age, tempts these poets to attempt bold departures in their verse, though quite often some of them fall willing victims to the dictional jargon of the day.

Quite promising among these young poets are Gulshan Majīd, Rafīq Rāz, Shāfi Shauq, Iqbāl Fahim, Ghulam Nabi Ātash, Farooq Fayyāz, Nasīm Shifāyī and Fahmida Mīr. The Nineties of Kashmiri verse will surely be theirs, as promised by off beat lines from *ghazals* like these:

Respected Sir,/pen and pencil in your hands:
tsu-tsa tsu-tsa and tsa
Atremble atremble, paper kite trotting
Mind baffled, held up in eddies of suspense
On upland slopes the sunray brooking no shadow
Shadow that configurates a letter
rounding off its corners
bringing it into being
being that has been
(to be: a dragon)
A tender creeper on the whirlwind
Hands atremble, penknife mending pencil.
(tr. from *Pananis Mālis Sūty Kenh Tsihy*
[A Few Moments with my Daddy]
by Gulshan Majīd)

Vitasta is coursing on and on;
yet in the scorching summer sun
Not a single drop to drink has come my thirsty way.
(tr. from Atash)

Just a moment back love's bridal party turned to stone;
Just a moment back it was, Sir,
hands were henna-dyed.
(tr. from Farooq Fayyāz)

Absorbing stars within your gazelle-eyes
go to your dream-chamber and lie asleep;
Your Dad's hut has a tattered roof,
cover it with your bridal scarf.
(tr. from Nasim Shifāyī)

Carrying just a remnant of memory
through the night I move groping
in the eyeless town;
with a counterfeit paisa in my purse
I bargain for love.
(tr. from *Panuny Māj* [Mother Mi
by Fahmida M

(Unmarked renderings by P. N. Pushp)

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Malayalam

M. LEELAVATHY

The Background

After the death of Kunchan Nambiar (Kuñcan Nampiyār, 18th century), Malayalam literature suffered a decline for about a century. One bright spot in this comparatively dark area in the firmament is Irayimman Thampi (1782–1863), author of a few outstanding lyrics and the librettos for three kathakali dance dramas. There were of course quite a few poetic compositions of the *kiḷipāṭṭu* genre and *thullal* genre popularized by Ezhuthachan (Eḻuttacchan) and Kunchan Nambiar respectively; but these only added to the quantity and not the quality of Malayalam poetry. Then came the phase of the *mahākāvyas* which exhibited neo-classic traits. They were, by and large, imitations of Sanskrit *mahākāvyas*, excluding the works of Kalidasa. This phase starts with the last quarter of the 19th century. *Rāmacandra Vilāsam* (A. Padmanabha Kurup), *Vijayōdayam* and *Rugmāṅgada Caritam* (Pantalam Kerala Varma), *Umākēraḷam* (Ulloor), *Vañciśa Vamśam*, and *Pāṇḍavōdayam* (Kodungallur Kochunni Tampuran), *Raghu Vīra Vijayam* and *Rāghavabhyudayam* (Vadakkumkur Rajaraja Varma), *Citrayōgam* (Vallathol), *Kēśavīyam* (K. C. Kesava Pillai), *Śrī Yēśu Vijayam* (Kattakkayam Cheriyan Mappilai) were some of these Malayalam *mahākāvyas*. Their authors were scholars in Sanskrit and their works generally showed an excessive adherence to Sanskrit vocabulary which repelled the common reader uninitiated in Sanskrit. An enthusiasm for translations also caught the imagination of poets. Many dramas and *kāvyas* and *itihāsas* were translated by them into Malayalam. Kerala Varma Valiya Koyil Thampuran (1845–1914) translated *Śākuntaḷam*. Kodungallur Kunjikuttan Thampuran (1864–1913) translated the whole of Mahabharata in just 874 days. This speed did not affect the quality adversely. This was indeed an extraordinary feat, for he just glanced at the original and simultaneously recited the verse-form translation to scribes. Yet it is curious that he did not venture upon a major original work that would stand the test of time. Kerala Varma, a pioneer in more fields than one, composed *Mayūrasandēśam*, supposedly original, but really under 'the shadow of the cloud' (Kalidasa's *Mēghasandēśa*) in many places.

Two distinctive schools of poetry had developed by this time—the Kerala Varma School, and the Venmani School. The nucleus of the former was Kerala Varma; that of the latter, the group of poets associated with the Kodungallur Palace. The great scholar-poets of Kodungallur were generally against saturating Malayalam poetry with Sanskrit. Venmani Nambudiri senior (1817–90) and Venmani Nambudiri junior (1844–93), father and step-brother respectively of Prince Kunjikuttan of Kodungallur, the prince himself, a few princes and some others together ushered in certain revolutionary changes in the diction of poetry. They were responsible for a new movement known as *Pacca Malayāḷam* (Pure Malayalam) Poetry, which eschewed Sanskrit words. It flourished for a while, but Sanskrit had been so profusely and inextricably blended into the native vocabulary that the movement soon lost its vigour. A few significant works which belong to the movement are four Pure Malayalam poems by Kundur Narayana Menon (1861–1936) and some narrative pieces by Oduvil Kunjikrishna Menon (1869–1916). The other poets who were well

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known during that period were the *Naḍuvam* poets, Sivolli Nampoothiri, Mooloor Padmanabha Panicker, Oravankara Rajan, Kottarathil Sankunni, K. P. Karuppan, Kuttamathu and Pallathu Raman. The Kerala Varma School preferred poetic diction with the accent on the Sanskrit content and a special rhyme. This rhyme required the consonant as well as the vowel to be identical in the second syllable of each line. The resultant fossilization of poetry in both the schools inevitably triggered off reactions against both and created an urge for change and an awakening in the very concept of poetry, its aim and its social significance. It was left to Kerala Varma's nephew, A. R. Rajaraja Varma (1863–1918), to launch a crusade against the dominance of the unimaginative mediocrity which was at the helm of Malayalam poetry and call for a romantic revolution in verse. His short poem *Malayavilāsam* (1895) dealing with his journey through the Western Ghats is one of the early experiments in lyrical composition in Malayalam.

V. C. Balakrishna Panicker (1889–1915), with his predilection for the romantic, paved the way for the transition. In his poem, *Oru Vilāpam* (An Elegy, 1907), he has raised the genre elegy to great heights. His *Viśwarūpam* (A Vision of the Universe, 1908) is considered a very outstanding lyrical poem in the language. *Oru Vilāpam* (1903) by C. S. Subramanian Potti and *Priya Vilāpam* (Lament for Friend, 1903) by M. Rajaraja Varma are also moving elegies in the language. These trends were succeeded by a romantic revolution. The trio—Asan, Vallathol and Ulloor—fought against the decadent elements and succeeded in combining aesthetic qualities and social significance in poetry. Strong sentiments of yearning, protest, impatience and dissatisfaction, along with a new sense of wonder, enthusiasm, exuberance and expectation, were the romantic elements of the renaissance in the Malayalam poetry of the period.

The Great Trio

Kumāran Asān. Kumaran Asan (Kumran Āśān, 1873–1924) attributed the root cause of the decadence of Indian Society to the caste system and was attracted by the Buddhist concept of a casteless and classless society. He was an ardent disciple of Sree Narayana Guru (1856–1928) who, like the Buddha, found solace in renunciation. The Guru too had enriched Malayalam with his devotional and metaphysical poems. Asan's favourite themes were either the eternal problem of reconciling the principle of renunciation with the mundane values of ordinary life, or the evils of such social inequalities as the caste-system and the ill-effects they had on Indian Society. Vallathol Narayana Menon (Vaḷḷattōḷ Nārāyaṇa Mēnōn, 1878–1958) was equally irked by social inequalities but he was more conscious of class-concepts and economic differences. Vallathol's romanticism manifested itself in patriotism, an admiration for the hoary tradition, a virtual deification of the ancient wisdom and cultural heritage of India. Similar trends were also to be discerned in the poetry of Ulloor (Uḷḷūr Paramēśvara Iyer, 1877–1949). This trinity represented the vernal splendour of Malayalam poetry. Though all the three had excelled in the dramatic narrative, they popularized the romantic lyric, with its subjectivity, imagination, emotive orientation and music.

Asan wrote only devotional poetry during the first half of his poetic career. His first poem that struck a different note was *Viṇa Pūvu* (The Fallen Flower, 1908), an elegiac composition on the fleeting nature of life. This is the concluding stanza:

> Turn back, my eyes; this flower will wither fast
> And mingle soon with dry forgotten dust.
> Beware! this is the lot of all; how can tears help?
> This earthly life, alas, is but a dream.
>
> (tr. G. Kumara Pillai)

This romantic poem was hailed as the herald of a new era in Malayalam poetry. Asan had a multifaceted poetic personality. He was the seer, the seeker, the lover, the revolutionary, the fatalist and the humanist. The seer in him preaches renunciation, the lover, the message of love. The revolutionary in him clamours for the repudiation of all man-made evils of life, the fatalist, discovers, in utter consternation, that all evils are not man-made and that man must reconcile himself to some of them. Reconciliation, however, is not easy and therefore man is, inevitably doomed to a life of sorrow and tears. But the humanist in him is ultimately convinced that 'our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts'. In his poem, *Naḷinī* (1911) the heroine, who abandons everything for love and does penance for five long years, ultimately finds the person whom she adores. But he has already taken the path of renunciation. She feels her heart will break, but as he leaves he pauses for a moment to impart to her the Supreme Wisdom, the secret of renunciation. In a moment of blissful detachment she is able to shake off the shackles of physical existence and dies—achieving by death what she could not by life for now he is able to admire her selfless love which is his only solace. The conflict of the opposites and their integration are the underlying theme of much significant poetry in India. Being a true metaphysical poet Asan too was drawn to such themes. But conflicts and tensions dominate the more mundane planes of life as well. In his equally well-known poem *Līla* (1913) the heroine who marries a man of her father's choice, is later convinced that her heart and soul are still with her lover. She returns to him and finds him mad. In remorse, she falls at his feet. He kisses her but then, as though possessed by a strange fright, runs away and is drowned in the rising waters of a

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river. She too follows him. Mundane love may create a paradise on earth, but that too is denied to man and once lost is never to be regained.

What is desired cannot be done;
What can be done is not desired.
The ultimate good remains unknown,
And the time-span too short; what a curse this life!
(tr.)

The conflict between personal love and renunciation is a recurring theme of several works of Asan, such as *Caṇḍālabhikṣuki* (A Chaṇḍāla Nun, 1923), *Karuṇa* (Compassion, 1924) and, even, *Sita* (1920). Social evils such as caste and the lust for power also were obsessing menaces for him and are the themes of these major works. *Duravastha* (The Woeful Plight, 1923) proclaims his conviction of the immediate necessity of a social revolution. It is the story of a Brahmin girl who weds a Harijan. During the Khilafat Movement, Muslims plundered and looted a Brahmin house after murdering the inmates. One girl alone escaped and took refuge in the cottage of a Harijan whom she married subsequently. She admired his dignity, nobility, kindness, ability to love and respect, lustless devotion, and such other mental qualities. In spite of his lack of education he was the very embodiment of human dignity and refinement. She was convinced that caste-difference was not an index to human qualities. This stress on human dignity irrespective of the man-made differentiations is the revolutionary element in the poem. *Caṇḍālabhikṣuki* is the story of the Harijan girl, who, having been drawn to spirituality joined the Buddhistic nunnery. It combines the concept of Supreme happiness through renunciation and the dignity of the casteless society propagated by the Buddha. *Karuṇa* is the story of Vasavadatta, who was subjected to infernal sufferings in payment of the penalty for all her sins, committed in pursuit of mundane happiness. She attains *Nirvāṇa* (liberation) convinced of the compassion of the Saviour, whose disciple Upagupta helped her gain this conviction and the Supreme faith during her last moments. *Sita* is a protest on behalf of Indian womanhood that has been kept in perpetual subjugation. But the spiritual problem of the integration of the opposites was the main emotional source of his poetry. Numinousness, or religiosity, was one of his most powerful personality traits. But an elemental eroticism was equally powerful. A fusion of these two provided the divine concept of love in the poetry of Asan, one of the great poets of India.

Vallathol. Vallathol concentrated more on the physical universe than the metaphysical. Born and brought up in a feudal joint family, he seems to have had an inherent yearning for freedom which assumed national proportions when occasion demanded. Vallathol received the conventional type of education of the time, which included learning Sanskrit and Ayurveda. He had not been acquainted with the English language and literature. Had he been, the essential romantic traits in him would have blossomed earlier. He had, however, Kalidasa as his guiding star, moulding his concept of poetry, and his romantic imagination could not be suppressed for long. The prince of National awakening came to wed the sleeping beauty of his romantic imagination. He found his spiritual Guru in Mahatma Gandhi who combined in his political thinking respect for the traditional ways of endurance with the modern spirit of revolt against unrighteous authoritarianism. Vallathol deeply revered the glories of the Indian heritage, eulogy of which became a strong emotional component of his nationalistic poems. He consciously indulged in propagating the cause of freedom. All the fire his words possessed was utilized to inflame the patriotic feelings of the people. He writes on Puranas:

You sing lullabies and put to repose and joy
Caressing art of Love, this world, your child
You throw away the sceptre and take up the yogi's staff
Replace the crown of gold with a tuft of matted hair
Heaven to you is the equal of grass in this world
One thing alone is to be sought after, liberty, real
salvation.
(tr. K. Ayyappa Paniker)

Apart from this deliberate use of poetry for a contemporary social purpose, one can trace an unconscious spirit of revolt against any form of domination even in Vallathol's narrative poems with puranic themes. In Parvathi who revolted and instigated Ganapathi to rise in revolt against the domination of Siva (*Gaṇapati*, 1913), in Usha who defied the authority of her father for the sake of love (*Bandhanasthanāya Anirudhan*; Anirudhan, the Captive, 1914), in Parasurama, who wielded his axe against his Guru's son who had unduly put on airs (*Śiṣyanum Makanum*; The Disciple and the Son, 1918), in Sakuntala who, in spite of being the very incarnation of patience, endurance and submissiveness, expresses gentle but firm protest against the irresponsibility of her own parents who abandoned her in childhood (*Acchanum Makaḷum*; Father and Daughter, 1936) this dormant characteristic of the poet's personality can be detected. In *Magdalana Mariam* (*Mary Magdelene*, 1921) and *Koccu Sita* (Young Sita, 1927) the revolt is that of womanhood against the eternal domination of the male.

Vallathol's spirit of revolt found its logical consummation in embracing the concept of socialism in the political context. According to him the number one enemy of mankind was poverty. He writes:

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Death is common—but
This burning in hunger, only in our land,
In this cremation ground, where pile up
The corpses of slaves from disunity

(tr. Balachandra Kurup)

Though a staunch devotee of Mahatma Gandhi, if the methods of Lenin would deliver the goods Vallathol was prepared to be his disciple too. But the concept of an armed revolution to meet the end could not satisfy him. The poetic dream of integrating Marx and Gandhi was first manifested in Vallathol's poetry. He had no religion but the love of mankind. The study of the Vedas, one of which (the *Ṛgveda*) he translated, had convinced him that the religion of the ancient sages of India was entirely humanism. Vallathol firmly believed that the role poets and writers had to play was that of the intellectual leaders of the land. But this could not be achieved merely by having grand ideas. Poetry had, first and foremost, to appeal to the aesthetic sensibility of man. Perfection in artistic coherence was the keynote of Vallathol's success. All the secrets of 'architectonics' of the poetic art had been revealed to him. Those who came to his poetry expecting 'handfuls' returned with full bags. Innumerable lyrical compositions, such as *Kiḷikkoñcal* (The Song of the Bird, 1922), *Karmabhūmiyuṭe Piñcukāl* (The Tender Feet of this Land of Action, 1921), *Bhāratastrīkaḷ tan Bhāvaśuddhi* (The Chaste Dignity of Indian Womanhood, 1923), bear testimony to the aesthetic perfection he achieved.

Ulloor. Ulloor too represented the combination of admiration for the glorious tradition and an inherent thirst for change. He also studied Sanskrit and possessed an unshakable faith in the wisdom of the ancients. But his education was modern and he was a scholar in English. His inherent poetic trait linked him to the neo-classic trends rather than to the romantic. He admired the authors of *campūs* (a literary genre combining prose and verse) and his technique resembled their style in the beginning. In fact, he could not shake off completely the influence of this style even when he turned to the romantic lyric later. But the thematic and emotional content of his poetry exhibited a close affinity to romanticism right from the beginning. He turned to history for stories of patriotism, of revolts against injustice and adventurous romances. Thus his *mahākāvya, Ūmākēraḷam* (1913), though cast in the neo-classic mould, strangely enough possesses the charm of romantic literature in an abundant measure. Shorter narrative poems and lyrics of the subsequent period, which were cast in the romantic mould, do not possess as much of the magic of romantic poetry as this *mahākāvya*. His narrative poems, *Karṇabhūṣaṇam* (Karna's Ornaments, 1929), *Piṅgaḷa* (The Story of Pingala, 1929), and *Bhaktidīpika* (The Light of Devotion, 1933) are considered among his best. Courage of conviction, patriotism, undaunted devotion to the ideal chosen, tireless striving for perfection, unremitting devotion to selfless *karma* are the qualities his characters possess. His aim was to evoke these qualities in the minds of his readers. He was always alive and faithful to this social commitment of poetry, the epitome of which is his most famous lyric *Prēma Saṅgītam* (The Hymn of Love):

The world has one faith—Love—which is its life
the full-moon that feeds us all with its nectar-milk
Prostrate, we rise; sowing, we eat; giving, we gain;
We are ourselves the architects of our heaven and hell.

Even in a tiny bit of fibre
I read the allegory sweet as ambrosia
Even in silence I heard
The sweet notes of His harp.

(tr. N. K. Seshan)

Other poets of the period with notable contributions are Vadakkumkur Rajaraja Varma, P. V. Krishna Warrier, Sardar K. M. Panikkar and Pallathu Raman.

The next generation of romanticists preferred to concentrate on the lyrical form. During this period Malayalam poetry could be rightly described as 'a nest of singing birds'. The 'first person singular' dominated this poetry. As introversion grew more prominent, there was less variety of characters in the poetry. But this did not mean that the external world was shut out. Instead, it was reflected in the form of subjective reaction. Nalappattu Narayana Menon (1887–1954), K. K. Raja, Kuṭṭippurattu Kesavan Nair and many others of the Vallathol School indulged in the exhuberance of lyrical poetry. Nalappattu Narayana Menon's *Kaṇṇunīrtuḷḷi* (Teardrop, 1924) is a unique elegy. Written on the death of his wife, it is not merely a lament on his personal loss but on the fleeting nature of all the glories of life in general. Emotion recollected in tranquillity with minimum external embellishments give it a sublime grandeur. G. Sankara Kurup called it a Taj in words. overwhelming grief that thwarts all endeavours to find solace in philosophic resignation is depicted in such depth that the pathos attains a purifying charm. This poem has been translated and published in English. The poet has studied Indian philosophy and was familiar with the teachings of the Indian mystics. Tagore exercised a consistent influence on him. Narayana Menon's collection of lyric poems, *Cakravāḷam* (Horizon, 1933), reveals the Tagorean influence on his vision and philosophy. He also translated several songs from Tagore's *Gītāñjali*.

K. K. Raja (1893–1968) was another notable lyric poet. He too has a good elegy to his credit, *Bāṣpāñjali* (Homage of Tears, 1931), written to mourn the death of an intimate

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friend. In diction, structure, depiction of sentiments, etc. this poem closely resembles *Kaṇṇunīṛtuḷḷi*, though not as good. Raja was not able to shake off the fetters of the neo-classic pattern of rhyme, metre and *alamkārās*.

Kuṭṭippurattu Kesavan Nair (1882–1959) was not a prolific writer but he made his presence felt with a few lyrics. He had a passion for the simplicity of rustic life and the beauty of the fauna and flora of Kerala. A poem of his, viz. *Grāmiṇa Kanyaka* (The Village Girl,) published in *Kāvyōpahāram* (1921) immortalizing the simple, unadorned charm of the village damsel has been widely acclaimed.

The immediate successors of the above group, viz. V. Unnikrishnan Nair, Vennikkulam Gopala Kurup, G. Sankara Kurup, Itappilli Raghavan Pillai, Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, Balamani Amma, P. Kunjiraman Nair, Pala Narayanan Nair and M. P. Appan also concentrated on lyrical poetry, leaving narrative poetry in the background. Readers no longer looked to poetry for a story or an element of drama or for new characters. Instead, they found one character, 'the Magnificent I', in an infinite variety.

This concentration on lyric poetry resulted in an emphasis on the musical element. Music was an integral part of Dravidian poetry originally, but in *Maṇipravāḷa*, with its subservience to the Sanskrit metre, the inherent music of indigenous poetry was practically lost. The expansion of the lyric and the revival of the musical element were simultaneous. The romantic ecstasies and the romantic agonies presented such an overwhelming variety that no literary historian can underrate the lasting influence these romanticists had on the sensibility of their contemporaries. The lyric indeed has come to stay. Dramatic narratives have their own charm; but the lyric, with its ecstatic music, has its own fascination. One cannot be substituted for the other. Both have equal relevance but even those with a predilection for the dramatic narrative could not afford to ignore the lyric since it exercised such a magnetic influence on the major poets of the period.

The Modern Lyricists

Among the modern lyricists are seven who deserve special mention, viz. G. Sankara Kurup, Changampuzha Krishna Pillai, P. Kunjiraman Nair, Balamani Amma, Edassery Govindan Nair, Vyloppillil Sreedhara Menon and N. V. Krishna Warrior.

G. Sankara Kurup (1901–78) won the first Jnanpith Award in 1965 and thus gained recognition in the national sphere. A passionate, submissive faith in an omniscient power marked the initial and last phases of Sankara Kurup's poetic career. This numinous element has a Tagorean touch about it. It is a deep-rooted aspect of the Indian collective unconscious. But the 20th century, with its rational outlook and scientific bias, necessitated some restriction on its unbridled expression. To the rational mind, worship of a personal God was something to be repressed no matter how strong the divine magnetism. But God could seldom be so easily banished from the psyche. So, whenever He made His appearance, He did so in disguise. In the poems of Sankara Kurup, He appears as the Sun at whose feet the sunflower lays her life in a state of bliss, from whom the lotus imbibes the energy to bloom, whom the Earth worships by incessantly circumambulating in a prostrate posture (*Śayanapradakṣiṇam*), and whose service is the cloud's life-mission. Symbols like the sunflower, lotus, wind, cloud, etc. are incarnations of the poet's psyche. Some of these poems are superb love-poems too, the love, depicted being the idealistic, feminine, delicate, and eternal with mystic overtones. Devotional ecstasies gain an energetic tempo and assertion in such later poems as *Viśvadarśanam* (The Vision of Universe, 1960) and *Śivatāṇḍavam* (The Thandava Dance of Siva, 1962). The infinite universe arouses in the poet a deep sense of wonder and humility. His spiritual problem was to reconcile his faith in the divine with his conviction that man's ultimate goal is the service of mankind. He ultimately succeeded in identifying Siva with mankind at whose feet man has to surrender his individual selfish aspirations.

The poetry of Sankara Kurup's middle period loudly proclaims its social commitment. The dramatic fantasia *Iruṭṭinumunpu* (Before Darkness, 1935), written when Italy pounced on Abyssinia, was a passionate protest against Imperialism and Fascism. His lyrical poem *Nāḷē* (Tomorrow), written in 1936, clearly revealed his affinity to socialism. Like many an Indian poet, he dreamed of integrating Marx and Gandhi. Dreams of National freedom inspired him.

> Ha! the day will come, certainly will come the day
> When the flag of my land over all oceans flutters
> Ha! the day will come, certainly will come the day
> When the world is all ears to what my land utters. (tr.)

But the communal riots, the murder of Mahatma Gandhi and the susbsequent tragic turn of events filled his poetry with melancholy. Turning away from the problems of international and national politics and ideological conflicts, he began concentrating on the 'sad simple annals of the poor' and the eternal mental universe with its inherent conflicts. *Perumtaccan* (Master Carpenter, see Appendix—*A Survey of Malayalam Literature* for English translation) and *Candanakkaṭṭil* (Sandalwood Cot), possess the charm of poetry that transcends time and place. Totally dissimilar in character, the poignant pathos of the former and the combination of melody and exquisite beauty of imagery in the latter take us to the pinnacle of lyrical grandeur. Though the atrocities and indignities that man is capable of occasionally took him to the depths of depression, he was not blind to the divine dignity that is the quintessence of

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human existence in its most sublime moments. He combined India's cultural heritage with a modern socialistic outlook to weave his own humanist philosophy which is the strength of his poetry that 'posterity will not willingly let die'.

The Edappally poets, Raghavan Pillai (1908–36) and Changampuzha Krishna Pillai (1911–47), took romantic poetry to the zenith of its glory as well as to its darkest depths. The entrancing Orphic melody of their songs, especially those of the latter, is captivating. In his obsession with Death, Raghavan Pillai reminds one, of Thomas Beddoes. Changampuzha too exhibits similar traits. But like the legendary Orpheus, the divine power of music enabled him to rekindle the song that the land had lost. His strength is his music, not his philosophy. In fact, he baffles all attempts to discover a consistent philosophy in his poetry. The poignant melancholy, the deep pathos, and an inexplicable moral disquietude reverberating in his poems point to an introverted personality. He died when he was only 36. But by that time, it seemed as though he had exhausted all his romantic ecstasies.

The theme of his dramatic poem, *Ramaṇan* (1936), in which certain characteristics of the pastoral elegy are also infused, is the suicide of a young shepherd disappointed in love. It was based on the tragic end of his brother poet Raghavan Pillai. The poem was a bomb thrown against a class-conscious society. Though caste had been condemned by Asan and others, class conflict had not been a serious theme for tragic poetry till then. Political theoreticians have not recognized this poem as a revolutionary contribution, because the defeatism of the hero is, according to them, not a step towards progress. Nevertheless, the poem expresses the suppressed protest of the younger generation against a class-based outlook of life. His concept of political freedom is inextricably linked with his concept of economic freedom. He would not worship a God who gave milk to the rich man's 'baby' while He allowed only saliva to the poor man's 'urchin'. He was certain that this system was man-made. If that were indeed God's way, he would not hesitate to reject such a God. Despite all this fire and fury and his occasional outbursts of sadism, and sentimentalism, he was essentially the poet of youthful love. He wrote not with ink, but with blood.

Balamani Amma (b. 1909), the most eminent among Malayalam poetesses, has been writing poetry for about half a century and has earned the respect of the old as well as the young. Here is the mother's perspective and this, perhaps, is one reason for the consistent admiration she commands. Sincerity to the inner self in the choice of themes, simplicity in exposition, absence of pretension, honesty of purpose in adopting an idealistic concept of life, a melodious ring and clarity in diction—all these contribute to the charm of her poetry. Her philosophy of life can be summed up in one word: Love—that is, compassion purified by tears. She started writing poetry at a time when the whole nation was boiling in the cauldron of the Freedom Movement. But her main theme for poetry was the mother's world. The patriot's enthusiasm was not totally absent but it had only secondary significance for her. During the forties and the fifties, when her contemporaries fell under the spell of the 'Pink Thirties', she did not become enthusiastic over socialist realism, though she 'always suffered with those whom she saw suffer'. She proclaimed: 'All the thorns that prick others' feet penetrate into my Soul.' This distress adds dignity and depth to her lyrical poems.

A few dramatic monologues of the later years of Balamani Amma's poetic life, written in 1966 in which immortal puranic characters such as Parasurama, Viswamithra and Vibheeshana indulge in self-analysis while seeking the ultimate truth of life, take the reader to intellectual heights that can be scaled only by those acquainted with the quintessence of Indian philosophy. In Viswamithra, who put a sputnik into orbit and who indulged in genetic engineering—experiments resulting in the creation of destructive beings—we find the reflection of modern man with his ego inflated by scientific achievements. Here you find her mother-image attaining universal dimensions, the protective anxiety embracing all mankind.

In prolific output and spontaneity P. Kunjiraman Nair (1905–78) equals Changampuzha; in the lavish use of imagery he excels all Malayalam poets. But very often he fails to create an impact because his imagination diffuses and his images are scattered in different directions in the absence of a strong centre that can hold them. The romantic nostalgia, the agony, the lyrical cry for the unattainable and an obsessive guilt complex are the main features of the emotional content of his early poems, which according to some, is the most exquisite romantic poetry. But righteous indignation, disillusionment and despair, evoked by the post-Independence degeneration of values, dominate his poetry in the later period.

Human babes burn in the fire of hunger
I take huge salary and fatten myself—sacrifice me.
My sister has no shelter. She sleeps on the roadside
I build mansions with black money—sacrifice me. (tr.)

Veṇṇikkulam Gopala Kurup (1902–80) and Pālā Narayanan Nair (b. 1911) also belong to the romantic group. The former has made an excellent translation of the Ramayana of Tulasidas. His translations of the Tamil classic *Tirukkuṛaḷ* and select poems of Subrahmanya Bharati compiled by the Sahitya Akademi have won acclaim. Among his many original poems, the collection entitled *Kāmasurabhi* (Wish-Fulfilling Cow,) has won the Sahitya Akademi Award. Naryanan Nair is a prolific poet noted for the effortless ease of his metrical composition. The series *Kēraḷam Vaḷarunnu* (Kerala Grows), which runs into eight volumes gives a passionate account of the many-sided

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development and traditional glory of his native land. M. P. Appan and Nalankal Krishna Pillai are also notable lyricists of rare charm. In particular Appan's contribution to the special genre of sonnets (*gītakam*) in Malayalam is outstanding both in number and quality. He has also expressed his strong resent against social inequalities as seen in the collection *Prasādam* (Offerings). Nalankal Krishna Pillai is essentially a romantic poet. His *Sindūrarēkha* (Vermilion Mark), a collection of 108 lyrics, has won recognition.

The most eminent of another group of poets who, despite their essentially romantic traits have been anxious to strike a different note, is Vyloppilli Sreedhara Menon (b. 1911). He possesses a strong faith in the creative evolution of man. A scientific outlook enables him to see both sides of life—the sublime and the grotesque. Yet he yearns for the light that was never on sea or land though, he proclaims, it is the latter that fascinates him.

The sea of life is, for us, the pot of poetry's ink
And not the pond of lilies white and pink. (tr.)

He respects the perennial life of mankind; yet his lyre often strikes a personal note that can stir the inner core. *Māmpaḷam* (The Mango Fruit) is the most soul-stirring of his short lyrics. There the sea of life is the remorseful grief of a mother. She had chided her son when he tore off a bunch of mango flowers. In childish anger he blurted out: 'I shall not come to pick the fruit!' How tragically prophetic were his words! Before the mangoes ripened, he died. As the poet watches 'the sea of life', it is the whirlpool of conflicts that strikes his imagination. He denounces a God who is deaf to the cry of anguish of a dying elephant driven mad by its chains, and then shot for trampling on everything that came in its way. *Sahyaṅṭe Makan* (The Son of Sahya Mountain), is a powerful poem that expresses the destructive powers of the unconscious, chained or repressed, and the devastating vengeful reaction of the oppressed multitude in the moment of awakening. *Kuṭiyoḷikkal* (Eviction, 1949) is Sreedhara Menon's masterpiece and it exposes the cancerous dilemma deep-rooted in the soul of the middle class. The speaking voice in this long dramatic monologue represents the bourgeoisie whose conscious desire is to serve the depressed and the downtrodden but whose unconscious conspires against his own conscious, driving him into the opposite camp to which he belongs by birth. The ambivalence of the middle-class intellectual meets with the inevitable nemesis, the 'eviction' of this class from their paradise. The message of the poem is clear: the euphoria of the upper class is a drunken state, for which Time has a sure cure in store, a blood bath! The poet exhorts:

Oh, the enlightened! Keepers of the world's conscience!
Time throws the challenge: Can you reverse
The existing order, decayed and perverse,
Through the path of love, leaving cruel force?
Then be quick. You have no time to lose. (tr.)

This poem that probes deep into the eternal disease of mankind is a work that deserves to be translated in all languages. It is the masterpiece of a writer who touched nothing that he did not adorn.

Another poet for whom the middle-class dilemma assumed significant proportions is the late Eḍaśśery Govindan Nair (1906–74). His poetic message is: 'Pains are dead bodies. Leave them in their graves. Arise, awake, embrace the unfailing strength.' He is generally admired for his moving life-portraits. The silent suffering of a girl, whose father is the typical inactive philosophic fatalist, and whose brother is an active party worker busy reforming the world while forgetting his household except at meal times, is for him the silent suffering of the Indian people who blindly accept anyone seeking their vote without knowing whether they elect heaven or hell. The pathos in the lives of the suffering individuals around him was his own 'domestic worries'. He suffered with them. Some of his best poems are archetypal. For example, *Kāvile Pāṭṭu* (The Hymn at the Sacred Grove, 1966) and *Pūtapāṭṭu* (The Song of the Devil-mother) awaken the Great Mother in the collective unconscious and hypnotizes the reader responding to the inner call. The rhythm and the melody have contributed a lot to the success of these poems.

N. V. Krishna Warrior (b. 1916) was convinced that the lilies of romanticism, when they fester, smell far worse than weeds. Warrior says bitter things in the sharpest language. His *Nīṇṭa Kavitakaḷ* (Long Poems, 1948) and *Nīṇṭa Kavitakaḷ Kuṟēkkūṭi* (More Long Poems, 1950) have all the characteristics of 'impure poetry' in which a balance is struck between reality and imagination. He avoids clouding the theme with imagery and concentrates on the impact the poem should create. The 'neck of rhetoric' was wrung by Warrior.

The mechanization of urban life has its impact on Warrior's poetry. The loss of personal identity, a product of the urbanization of life, appeared for the first time in Malayalam poetry in the works of Warrior. The phenomenon of the city devouring the individual and the technological alienation of sensibility were neither so acute nor so widespread in the Kerala of the forties and the fifties, but the individual being lost in the crowd had already been felt in several cities outside. Warrior, thus, was ahead of his times in Kerala. In these manifestations of change in poetic form and attitude however, the influence of western poetry, particularly that of the French poet Laforgue, can be traced. Contact with European minds through English has considerably revolutionized the aptitude and attitude of the Malayalam poets. Krishna Warrior's use of irony and stylistic innovations, which brought his poetry closer not to music but to speech,

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were taken up by others. Romantics like Changampuzha had tended towards symbolist hermeticism and aspired to the condition of music—Krishna Warrior weaned poetry away from these characteristics. He had already proved that he could exploit word-music by such poems as *Paḷaya Pāṭṭu* (Old Song), and *Tīvaṇṭiyile Pāṭṭu* (The Song in the Train). But he resolved that such allurement had to be got rid of. Many of the younger poets had difficulty in wrenching themselves away from the Orphic spell cast by Changampuzha. Warrior performed this feat with remarkable ease. An enemy of hypocrisy and pretension, he has been bent on exploding the romantic myths and unrealistic values. The influence of Marxist philosophy and Freudian psychology have been responsible for shaping Warrior's rationalism and scientific outlook. De-divinization of old-world gods has been, for him, a recurring poetic theme in magnificently diverse forms. In his famous poem *Alexis Puṇyavāḷan* (St. Alexis) he challenged the religious concepts of sin, saintliness, renunciation, other-worldliness, mortification, penance, etc. The myth of the spiritual values of asceticism was exploded and the mundane values of material life were consecrated. The sanctification of earthly existence is his passion; to break the shackles of body and mind is his poetic mission. It is significant that during the age of non-violence, Krishna Warrior sang songs of revenge and retaliation against injustice, oppression and inhuman cruelty. For him the post-Independence era brought only bitter disillusionment and he gave vent to his feelings in his Gandhi-Godse series, in which he identifies the suffering millions with Gandhi and the exploiters, who swear in the name of Gandhi, with Godse. His poems have, thus, always echoed the voice of conscience of the age.

> Wherever man's hands are chained, there my hands ache
> Where man is oppressed, there the blows fall on my back
> Where man struggles for resurrection, there I live in pain:
> Today my land is Africa, and I cry for her pain. (tr.)

Two other poets of the same period K. P. G. Nambudiri (1917–77) and Cherukad (1914–78) showed greater propagandist inclinations. They swore unswerving allegiance to socialist realism in literature and to marxism in politics.

It was in 1946 that the first rehearsal of the armed revolution was staged in Vayalar, Kerala. Political theorists had miscalculated that the time was ripe for revolution. Hundreds of agricultural labourers and others of the working class sacrificed themselves at the altar of revolution, but their martyrdom was in vain. This turn of events obsessed the intellectuals in different ways. Poets like P. Bhaskaran, Vayalar Rama Varma, O. N. V. Kurup, Thirunellur Karunakaran and Putusserry Ramachandran are those who enthusiastically sang the songs of revolution. But the passion subsided gradually. One of the two long narrative poems written during this period *Kuṭiyoḷikkal* (Eviction, 1949) by Vyloppilli, has already been analyzed. The other one, *Irupatām Nūṯṯāṇṭiṅṯe Ithihāsam* (The Epic of the Twentieth Century, 1958) written a decade later by Akkittam Achuthan Namboodiri (b. 1926) deals with the inner conflict of a political leader obsessed by remorse. The chronology of these two works should be taken note of while making any comparative studies. The fact should also be noted that the difference in the visions of both poets is as significant as the difference in environments. But the point that a remorse-stricken political leader could be the speaking voice in 1958 cannot be ignored and has historical significance.

Though the Vayalar struggle misfired, the dream of the ultimate triumph of the revolution had not faded in 1949. But due to the split of the Communist Party and the ideological confusion that ensued many of the intellectuals lost ground. *Irupatām Nūṯṯāṇṭiṅṯe Itihāsam* deals with the remorse not of the inactive idealist who repents his past inertia, but the remorse of the active politician who has been disillusioned despite his activity. Armed revolution is deemed the short-cut to the final solution in *Kuṭiyoḷikkal*. The stroke cuts the Gordian knot. But in *Irupatām Nūṯṯāṇṭiṅṯe Itihāsam* the stroke achieves nothing. The leader had convinced the downtrodden masses that the time had arrived to wage the ultimate war of redemption. But they are thrown from the frying pan into the fire. The poem indirectly ridicules the actions of small priests incapable of playing the part of visionary prophets. A remorse-stricken political leader is, probably, a phenomenon that occurs only in the poetic imagination. For us, it is significant that it occurred in the imagination of Akkittam. A shepherd who leaves his flock to the mercy of the tiger, and saves his own skin, treats his sheep as mere animals. Leaders who consider the rank and file merely as animals to be thrown into the sacrificial fire are not worth the name. Akkittam's epic, thus, went straight to the crux of the most important problem of the period. Akkittam also has to his credit several hundred lyrics and short narrative pieces dealing with the stories of the simple people around him. In poetic diction and style he is similar to Edasserry and Krishna Warrior. A touch of humour verging on tears adds lustre to many of his narrative poems. *Paṇṭatte Mēśāntiri* (The Old Priest), a touching tragedy of individuals who are blind to the changing times, is an example. Akkittam's philosophy is summed up in these lines:

> A drop of tear, I shed for others
> And a thousand suns rise in my soul
> A smile on my lips blooms for others
> And an eternal full moon brightens my soul. (tr.)

In his outlook on life, philosophy and poetic concepts Olappamanna (b. 1923) closely resembles Akkittam. He has an eye for the tragic aspects of life and concentrates more on the tragedy itself than on the external forces that cause

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it. He has written a number of remarkable story-poems of which *Naṅṅēmakkuṭṭi* is the most outstanding. The villains in this tragedy of the Brahmin girl are caste, social customs, individual irresponsibility and, finally, the structure of society. The poem is a loud protest not only against the outdated caste-system but against the uncivilized attitude of society to erring girls and unmarried mothers.

The poets, now, turned their minds to human tragedies, indirectly implying the need for a social revolution. P. Bhaskaran (b. 1924) and Vayalar Rama Varma (1928–75) entered the poetic scene as inspired revolutionaries, with their ambition to wield the pen as a sword. But this zeal gradually declined. This is generally attributed to what is usually termed as the 'liberation' movement organized to oust the Communist Government in Kerala. But the faith of these poets in the goal of revolution did not dwindle. It is merely that they turned to a more popular and lucrative medium, viz. writing lyrics for films. In the world around, all values suffered deflation except the value attached to money. Poets too began to develop non-political personalities. It could no longer be said, as Robert Graves did, that 'money could buy anything but truth-possessed poets'. This gradual decline in the revolutionary zeal was also due to several other factors—the split within the Communist Party, the confusion that followed and the spread of Marxist humanism. The poets who stood by values either grew introverted or turned to the 'little domestic worries' of the self and the world around. Thus, the Malayalam poetic universe was divided into two: a new romantic world of imagination where light and warmth still existed, and a modernist netherworld where darkness reigned supreme.

O. N. V. Kurup (b. 1931) had earned fame as a revolutionary poet even as a teenager in the late forties and was one of the most eminent among them in his twenties. The diction and style of the revolutionary trio, Bhaskaran, Vayalar and O.N.V., show explicit affiliation to the Changampuzha line in their formative period. In the second stage of poetic growth, however, O. N. V. strikes a different note, though occasionally the old charm possesses him. For him the pink dreams are still alive and he is still the spokesman of the downtrodden who have been deprived of the promised land. At no stage has he betrayed revolutionary ideals nor disowned the values associated with them. Yet the 'revolutionary frenzy' subsided. 'Little domestic worries' and small domestic beauties no longer appeared so little or so small. The old embers are still alive and could blaze again when the occasion demands. Though he is a popular screen-lyricist he does not let the screen smother his poetry. As Bhaskaran and Vayalar have frequently done, he too has elevated the screen-lyric to the level of poetry.

A group of neo-romantics, Vishnu Narayanan Namboodiri, M. N. Paloor, Sugathakumari, K. V. Ramakrishnan, N. K. Desam, V. A. Kesavan Nambudiri, Kadavanattu Kuttikrishnan, Punalur Balan, T. R. Sreenivas, Nalinakumari and many others, have not allowed themselves to be thrown overboard by the modernist storm. Vishnu Narayanan (b. 1939) believes that poetry has serious tasks to undertake and has succeeded in fulfilling his part. There is the grandeur of the Upanishads in several of his poems. He is fully aware of the Indian situation and the Indian capacity for indecision. He compares this situation to a house on fire. The inmates indulge in incessant discussions on the cause of the fire, its historic significance, the theory behind it, the remedy, the determinism involved in it, etc. but no one acts. Only the discussions continue. An ultimate solution will probably be discovered. But, by then, the house would be reduced to ashes. Sugathakumari (b. 1934) is a highly gifted poet with a numinous bent of mind. She finds the pretensions, hollowness and drabness of city-life sickening. A strong yearning for genuineness is an undercurrent in many of her poems. The mythology of the East and the West has often supplied her with apt objective correlatives. Most of her recent poems have a direct bearing on contemporary life. The loss of values, rampant corruption and callous selfishness that have become the motivating spirit, fill her with righteous indignation and agony. K. V. Ramakrishnan (b. 1935) also writes in similar vein. But M. N. Palur (b. 1932) who has a sense of humour, coats the bitterness with the sugar of cynical laughter: the Twentieth Century's universal prescription for the Man whose headache in life is 'anacin'. N. K. Desam (b. 1936) is with N. V. Krishna Warrior in poetical style and concepts. He has no patience with humbugs and urges Christ at the 'Second Coming' not to offer the left cheek but to repay his detractors in the same coin on both cheeks! All these poets are deeply aware of the loss of values, identity and hopes. But despite the disillusionment that threatens to drown their hopes, they still hold fast to the faith in a resurrection. They bank upon a philosophy of change and rebirth of ideas.

The popular satirist Chemmanam Chacko (b. 1926) gives the reader the best, and the last, laugh. But his laughter is always in light vein, in spite of the fact that he shoots his pointed arrows at all the inflated insincerities. 'The patient who won't leave the hospital bed had been given a blood-transfusion and the blood happened to have been donated by a minister. The habit of clinging on to the chair had got into his blood.' Chacko effectively uses irony and hyperbole to make his satire sharp and pungent. P. Narayana Kurup (b. 1934) is another notable satirical poet.

All Utopian dreams having been thoroughly shattered, modernist trends, such as the negation of the values of the past, nihilism, apocalyptic awareness, scepticism, existential anguish, the sense of loss of identity, death worship, etc. begin to dominate Malayalam poetry from the sixties: such modernistic characteristics as using broken images, and emotional sequence instead of logical sequence, suggesting ideas and sentiments through quotations and reference to

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famous literary situations and characters, etc. had been introduced much earlier by Madhavan Ayyappathu, in whose poetry the impact of urbanization and the mechanization of life is clearly discernible. It is true that the western influence is traceable in the poetry of this period. The picture of the modern city becoming infernal appears in all its ferocity in the poetry of N. N. Kakkad (b. 1927). One of his collections is called *Pātāḷattiṅṭé Muḷakkam* (The Roar of the Inferno). The apocalyptic visions of the megalopolitan inferno are scattered through his poems which grip you with a freezing apocalyptic awareness. Some of the poems of Ayyappa Paniker (b. 1930) such as *Mṛtyupūja* (Death Worship) and *Kurukṣétra* are in the same category. The emotional content of Malayalam poetry now is similar to the mood in *Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot. Existential anguish and the centrifugal spin towards suicide or death, filling every line of poetry, with not a ray of hope to be found in the darkness, begin to dominate the poetic scene. A state of inertia overpowers everything else. *Ātmagītā* (Song of the Soul), by Sacchidanandan and similar poems of the younger generation represent this mood. These poems, with their considerable influence on the youth and the adolescent, have been widely criticized as a deliberate and irresponsible discarding of social obligations by the meaningless imitation of western trends. This accusation has been aggravated by the declaration of some of the poets that they have responsibility towards no one but their own selves. But this was mere protest for the sake of protest. No poetry printed and published is a monologue. If the poet does not want society to listen to him, he wants it to overhear him, because under the pretext of talking to himself he is talking to it. Any responsible individual is automatically responsible to society, the individual self being but a part of the social self. With all their existential anguish, melancholia, scepticism, apocalyptic awareness, death wish, etc. these poets are actually performing a ritualistic ceremony. All the maladies are exorcised from the collective unconscious and imprisoned in their poetry and other forms of art. Only when the act of exorcism fails, does it have the opposite effect. We do not judge poetry by the instances that failed to be poetry. We are bothered only with 'poems written by poets and not idioms written by idiots'.

Cherian K. Cherian held out high promise in the sixties, but writes little now. M. Govindan (b. 1919) and G. Kumara Pillai (b. 1923), of the older generation, were essentially romanticists but are now in the modernist camp. Kaṭammaniṭṭa Ramakrishnan (b. 1935) is the most powerful poet among the modernists. The negative trends and the nihilist approach are to be found in his poems too. But his genuine self is revealed in his committed poetry which overpowers you with savage force. On the themes of nemesis that awaits the oppressing class and the resurgence of the oppressed community, his impassioned poetry has no equal in its powerful pull. Āṟṟūr Ravi Varma (b. 1931) also belongs to this group of moderns and is noted for his 'moral fury' expressed in a fittingly furious style. The modern malady of the loss of identity is another of his favourite themes. Kavalam Narayana Panicker (b. 1928) has developed a poetic style of his own in which the rhythm and the magic of primitive folklore have found revival. But the content is, of course, pungent criticism of our hypocrisies and an exposition of the trivialities of our existence.

Negation, protest and fury are generally expressed by the moderns employing all those devices that strike an opposite note to that of the romanticists. All the characteristics of 'anti-poetry' are employed. An apparent unconcern is put on as a mask. 'Everything that would ordinarily seem serious, now seems a tragic joke.' Thus the tendencies to shock and to joke developed simultaneously. They appear dissimilar, but actually originate in the same mental attitude. Ayyappa Paniker and Katammaniṭṭa Ramakrishnan excel in the use of paradox and irony, the most effective weapons in this complex shock-joke war the moderns wage. The satirical cartoon poems of the former have a grenade-like force.

Kerala is a land of diversity. Far from the main trends you find the poetry of devotion, poetry with a neo-classic flavour, poetry in lyric and epic forms. V. K. Govindan Nair's (1903–78) *śḷōkas* (verse in Sanskrit metre) are mainly devotional and have a unique beauty and mystic charm. 'Muraḷi' (T. Kṛiṣṇan Bhaṭṭatiri), who has composed an *itihāsakāvya* based on the Bhagavatha, writes superb poetry. Ōṭṭūr Unni Nambudiripad is another devotional poet. Sister Mary Beninja has written several lyrical and narrative poems as well as a *mahākāvya*. Kaṭattanāṭṭu Madhavi Amma is another well-known poetess. Some of the poets of the old schools still have a fascination for *mahākāvyas*. Puthenkavu Mathen Tharakan, Madham Parameswaran Namboodiri, Ponkunnam Syed Mohammaed, M. Madhava Warrier, T. R. Nair, Pravittānam Devassia and a few others are authors of *mahākāvyas*. The recent translations of ancient Tamil epic poems, such as the *Kamba Rāmāyaṇam* and the *Śilappatikāram* have enriched Malayalam poetry. S. K. Nayar, who translated the former, is a master of the classic style that reminds the reader of the Father of Malayalam poetry, Ezhuthachan. S. Ramesan Nair, one of the younger generation, has also done full justice to the translation of the other classic.

Turning from the macrocosmic to the microcosmic, there is Kunjunni (b. 1927) who is unique in his field. His short invectives, proverb-like single line aphorisms, and limerick pieces concealing sinister laughter, explode with a bang when they are aimed at hypocrisy.

The politically committed poetry of the present comes from the extreme Left. Metre and music have been discarded by these extremists. The burning new austerity demands the style of 'anti-poetry', 'reducing poetic diction

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to those elements that belong to the stock of prosaic usage'. But it is too soon to predict how far these new trends will influence Malayalam poetry in the immediate future.

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Marathi

M. V. RAJADHYAKSHA

In history, quite often, a year becomes memorable because some event that took place during the year brought about a great change. The year 1885, for instance, is a historic year for the country for it saw the birth of the Indian National Congress which was to spearhead the freedom movement. It is a significant year in the history of Marathi literature too as it saw the publication of the first 'modern' poem of Keshavsut (Keśavasuta, 1866–1905), hailed as the Father of Modern Marathi Poetry, and of the first novel of Hari Narayan Apte (Hari Nārāyaṇa Āpṭe, 1864–1919), hailed as the Father of the Modern Marathi Novel. The two great writers between them launched the movement, which was soon to gather strength, for the emancipation of their literature from the modes and conventions that had made it stagnant and irrelevant to contemporary life. There had of course been in the preceding 40 or 50 years halting, tentative attempts by some writers to break away from convention; but these were rather ineffectual for a variety of reasons: the attempt was not persevered with; or the awareness of the modern was not firm enough; or as a creative artist the writer had serious limitations. For Keshavsut and Apte the new direction, in their own genre, was well defined, and they explored it with a sense of purpose; and, most of all, they were gifted writers.

The Old and the New (1885–1920)

The new kind of education had been initiated by the British rulers in the 1820s; in fact, it was the first time a regular educational system available to everyone was set up. Inevitably, those who were educated were deeply impressed by two things: the many ills in the life around them; and the need for removing them. They realized that they had to break the shackles of the past and move towards a happy, healthy future in which the individual could enjoy more freedom to build his life. With the scales from their eyes removed by western ideas they could see the full extent of the degradation to which the large majority of their people had sunk—women even more than men—and at least some of them set about educating the community into an awareness of its sorry state. Printing had just arrived, and in its wake, periodicals. Those who wanted to educate their fellow beings took to the new medium with zeal. They wrote, they translated, they argued, they attacked.

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And, invariably, they stirred up opposition. The opposition came from a section of the newly educated, who were suspicious of the rulers and the new ideas being planted by their educational system, and who started eulogizing the old ideals and glorifying the past. This set off the Great Debate which was to rage for whole decades. Broadly, on one side were the rationalists and reformers, and on the other were the revivalists and conservatives. But, only broadly. The battle-lines were never drawn clearly; and men sometimes strayed over to the other side. There were divided loyalties. Literature reflects the loyalties, and the division, or confusion. Poetry does it even more sharply than the other forms.

The Age of Keshavsut. Keshavsut—whose full name was Krishnaji Keshav Damle (Kṛṣṇāji Keśava Dāmle)—was unwavering in his championship of social reform. In poem after poem he lashes out with vehemence against such evils as untouchability, subjection of women and exploitation of the worker.

Let the old die
Burn it, or bury it
Don't let it fester. (tr.)

is a characteristic utterance from one of his more powerful poems, *Tutārī* (The Trumpet). The title too is characteristic; it is a call to arms. A similar metaphor supplies another title: *Navā Śipāī* (The New Soldier). This soldier proclaims:

No Brahmin, no Hindu, I am of no one sect.
They are the sinful who narrow what is universal. (tr.)

But Keshavsut is no mere firebrand iconoclast. Complementing him is the idealist, who nurses a dream of a beautiful tomorrow. He is 'a harbinger of peace', of the peace which alone can fashion beauty.

The present is a spacious hill
Carve beautiful caves in it.

(tr. from *Tutārī*)

The English romantic poets, as represented in *The Golden Treasury*, were Keshavsut's favourites. He himself was a romantic by temperament, but of a different mould from that of any of the English poets; his was a native, authentic romanticism. And the ardent social reformer in him brought to it a realistic strain, as well as a rationalistic one. From his great concern for social reform, his detractors deduced that he was unconcerned about political reform: a deduction belied by some of his poems, in one of which he says: 'We have no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, because of slavery'. The unfortunate link-up between the political, radical and the social reactionary made the charge sound plausible.

And there were also other strings to Keshavsut's lyre. He wrote a few intimate, personal poems. It was a new note. Towards the end of his life the transcendental seemed to draw this rationalist and it inspired two of his great poems, both poems of rapture: *Zapurzā* (a meaningless onomatopoeic word, suggesting a near-unconsciousness of reality that comes upon one, while one spins around faster and faster) and *Harapale Śreya* (The Lost Good).

Like Tukaram, the medieval saint poet, whom he greatly admired, Keshavsut is deeply conscious of the might of words and of poetry.

Impelled by inspiration, we roam about the universe lightly;
Our vision can pierce space and time!
All your grandeurs here! Before us they are lustreless;
A mere touch of our hands can impart to a thing
Excelling beauty, such is the magic in these hands.
You keep shaking the chaff, we pick the true essence!

(tr. from *Āmhi Kona?* [Who Are We?])

Some of his poems are on this theme. Like Tukaram, again, Keshavsut employs a diction which is close to living speech and which spurns embellishment; another truly 'new' feature in his day.

All these years Keshavsut has been an inspiration to poets, some of whom would seem to be very unlike him. His intense personal note, his genuine social consciousness, and his directness of utterance, drew out the poet in these persons, and also a sense of freedom which stirred them to strike out their own individual path. Truly 'A poets' poet', as he has been called.

Narayan Vaman Tilak (Nārāyaṇa Vāmana Tilak, 1865–1919) was steeped in Sanskrit learning; but finding no solace in the Hinduism of the day, he became a Christian. Christianity gave him solace, but he was not at ease with some of the bigoted missionaries with whom he worked. 'Changing one's religion does not mean changing one's country', he would say, and his poetry continued to be truly Indian in its idiom; particularly in the flavour it carried of the poetry of the medieval Maharashtrian saints—and that was found even in his Christian devotional verses. Like Keshavsut, Tilak was pained by the injustices and sufferings around him. Pained, but not angered, for he was made differently. He found peace in the simple beauties of the home and, of course, in religion. And he was a childlike optimist ('The lovely stars are born of darkness'). His poems of social protest, like *Raṇaśiṅgā* (The Battle-horn), have none of the militancy of Keshavsut. In fact, he has been rightly described as 'a poet of flowers and children'. He wrote lovingly of nature—a 'new' trend—and his diction and imagery have the savour of rural life.

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Of the important poets of the age, Vinayak (Vināyaka Janārdana Karandīkar, 1872–1909) was most unlike Keshavsut. He was like him in his expression—his preference for the flowing, natural-sounding 'jāti' metres to the hide-bound Sanskrit 'vṛttās'—and in the personal note. But Vinayak is lost in the past, glorifying its traditions and their goddess-like women. A characteristic didacticism of his is:

> Those who have a splendid past have a beautiful future;
> This is what history teaches all the time.

Govindagraj (Govindāgraja; real name: Ram Ganesh Gadkari, 1885–1919) called himself a 'saccā celā' (true disciple) of Keshavsut, which he was in some ways, but not in all. A versatile genius, he wrote plays—some of which have been excellent theatre these 60 years—, poetry—which charmed the reader as no other poetry did—, and the sparkle of his humour has not dimmed to this day. In fact, the three elements—drama, poetry and humour—are often found together in harmony in his work, whichever the form.

Govindagraj's *Dasarā* (the day on which, according to history, the Maratha warriors crossed the bounds of their territory for adventure and conquest) is in the same verse form as Keshavsut's *Tutārī*, and contains a similar denunciation of the caste-ridden society. But it lacks the concentrated energy of that poem, its own energy sometimes wasting itself on inessentials. Lacking creative vigour, Govindagraj often let his fancy, his wealth of language, his metrical facility and even his sense of humour take control of him and deflect him from the strait process. There is then a diffusion of effect, a sense of dissipation of powers. But these powers were of a rare quality, and when they were integrated and well-harnessed, they fulfilled themselves in great poems. One such poem is *Prema āṇi Maraṇa* (Love and Death), a telling allegory of love, in which a tree is enamoured of lightning, pines for it, and is finally felled by it. Reputed as a 'bard of love', Govindagraj was in his element when he wrote of unhappy love. The theme quickly came into fashion. Some of his love-poems have a personal ring; but in the others it is romantic love he is in love with. He has the excesses of the romantic, as well their true romantic imagination. Such an imagination is usually drawn to history and invests it with loud colour and emotion. So does his. Govindagraj's rational self would have, like Keshavsut, nothing to do with history and tradition, but his feelings were involved in them. The irrationality of it is typically romantic and the dissociation, or split personality, behind it is typical of the age.

For sheer lyricism the best poet of the age is 'Balkavi' (Bālakavi; real name: Tryambak Bāpuji Thombre, 1890–1918). His most beautiful poems are about nature. Ever a child, he created finespun myths about things in nature—as in *Phularāṇī* (The Flower Queen), which tells us of an innocent, bashful flower falling in love with a ray of the sun, and of the wedding, with everyone in nature joining in the ceremony—and so does the nature-intoxicated poet. ('He sprinkled the "phularāṇī", as ablution, with his fresh songs.') It is much more than personification. Balkavi loses his identity in nature. 'The poet became nature; all nature became the poet.' His was a quest for beauty, his one longing being 'to kiss the dew on the flower of beauty'. But the shadow of reality soon began to thicken and ideal beauty became even more unattainable. 'The spirit kept yearning for *caitanya*; but, alas, the hard knots of the body would not come loose.' Would death secure release—a dream-like death? Death was both a fear and a hope. 'Seeing dreams in one's dreams, one should die in a dream.' The poet's death at a young age in a railway accident was all the more tragic.

This poet of nature, of its beauties and graces, strayed into a historical narrative which he did not live to complete; he also wrote a poem (*Dharmavīra*) indicting social obscurantism. The theme shows the influence of Keshavsut's *Tutārī*, the impassioned expression of which was however alien to Balkavi. In fact, even the title—*Dharmavīra*—which looks back to a noble past, is quite un-Keshavsutlike.

More Followers of Keshavsut. Closer in spirit to Keshavsut than any of the poets discussed above is Bee (Bī; real name: Nārāyaṇa Muraḷīdhara Gupte, 1872–1947). His slender output—49 poems—and the obscurity of his style brought him neglect. The obscurity came from opaque imagery, a love of metaphysical subtlety, condensed expression which makes no concession to the common reader, and—strangely enough—a much-Sanskritized diction; strange, because the poet himself condemned pedantry and the tyranny of Sanskrit. 'Why should the rules of the Sanskrit language oppress you?' he asks; and adds: 'Poetry is not putting together lovely sweet-sounding words; nor the acrobatics of fanciful meaning.' Bee's most well-known poem is also his most controversial: *Cāphā* (The Champaka Tree). The allegory of the tree that would not blossom, but did when his beloved offered 'pure' love (one transcending the physical) has been variously and contentiously interpreted. Bee shares with Keshavsut a 'modern' attitude to life, with Govindagraj a fascination for the romantic past and with Balkavi a passion for beauty.

Several other poets of the age were stimulated by different aspects of Keshavsut. Eknath Pandurang Rendalkar (Eknātha Pāṇḍuraṅga Reṇḍāḷakar, 1887–1920) was an iconoclast in matters social and religious; he also pioneered blank verse, with Sanskrit poetry as the model, encouraged by the success of the Bengali poet, Michael Madhusudan Dutt. Nagesh (Nāgeśa—N. G. Navare, 1889–1967), N. S. Rahalkar (Rahāḷakar, 1882–1957), Madhavanuja (Madha-

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vānuja—K. H. Moḍak, 1872-1916) and Datta (D. K. Ghāṭe, 1875-99) deserve mention for contributing to the modernity initiated by Keshavsut.

But the old, as was only to be expected, lingered on in a fairly large number of poets, the meaner ones among whom were no better than competent versifiers. The better ones were mostly content with faithfully following Sanskrit poetry and poetics and the 'pandit' poets, and displaying prosodic virtuosity and a propensity for moralizing. They had their admirers though, in that age as well as in the next one.

Keshavsut founded no 'school', or a well-defined tradition. If he had, it would have been incongruous with his role as liberator. To call this period 'The Age of Keshavsut' is at best a convenience, at worst a misnomer.

Second Phase: Looking Backward and Forward (1920-47)

The death of Lokamanya Tilak in 1920 created a vacuum in the political life of Maharashtra. The preceding two years had removed three leading poets and the novelist Apte, but without quite creating in literature the kind of disheartening vacuum in politics.

Tilak was a colossus. He had taken a conservative stance in social matters so as not to alienate the common people from his spirited politics—particularly in its early years. His successors exaggerated the stance and diluted the politics. Obscurantism was now at a premium—with its usual features: uncritical praise of the past, sanctifying 'tradition' (equating it with the customs and conventions of the higher castes) and opposition to reform. But this soon set off a reaction; and an escape was sought from the narrowness of it all—particularly by the young. The escape was in various directions. Mahatma Gandhi, with his broad-based movement breaking several old barriers, offered one. Another was the socialist creed which was gradually to splinter into factions of diverse hues. Yet another direction led into a greater narrowness: militant Hindu nationalism. All these, in their turn, provoked sharp reaction. The literature of the age echoes this variety of creed.

Chandrashekhar and Tambe. Though these two poets were slightly junior to Keshavsut, and considerably senior to Govindagraj and Balakavi, it is convenient to treat them here. Chandrashekhar (Candraśekhar Śivarāma Gorhe, 1871–1937) wrote his poems between 1895 and 1936 and they might as well have been written before Keshavsut. With his mastery over language and prosody, he had the basic virtues of the pandit poet. He wrote narrative verse and didactic verse, besides some translations, but he assiduously avoided the personal note. Incongruous in this age, he best represents the tough old mode defying the new.

Chandrashekhar had hardly any following: but Tambe (Bhāskara Rāmacandra Tāmbe, 1874–1941) has probably had more followers than any other modern poet. His popularity comes from the song-quality of his poems: the diction is pleasing to the ear; the *rāga* in which the poem is intended to be sung is often mentioned at the top; there is usually a *dhripada* (refrain). The poem spells itself out from stanza to stanza, with elaboration and illustration and is therefore no strain on the understanding.

Some of Tambe's love lyrics have had great appeal, and that for more than their musical quality, several of which use the idiom of love to express *bhakti*, in the medieval tradition; he also uses it in an invocation to Death. In the latter, he is the young bride waiting to give herself to her lover, eager and bashful and nervous. Such poems, and the few Hindi poems that he wrote, serve to remind us that he belonged to Madhya Pradesh. So does a certain feudal flavour in his work. Cut off from Maharashtra, Tambe was not affected by the changing literary climate there. He rejected the Keshavsut way, being himself all for 'art for art's sake'.

The 'Ravikiran Mandal'. Characteristic of the 1920s was the formation in Pune of a group, calling itself, 'Ravikiraṇa Maṇḍaḷa', of eight writers, one of them being a woman. They earnestly set out to redeem poetry from the excesses of fancy and language into which Govindagraj had led it, as also, maybe, from the intensities of Keshavsut. They would have their poetry geared to the life around them—that is, to urban middle class life. For a change, the rural and the historical, neither over-romanticized, were drawn upon, the former for its touch of simple beauty and the latter for its patriotic fervour. The 'Mandal' was also very interested in promoting innovations in prosody and in the poetic forms. It was active for about 10 years as a group, though individual members continued to publish their books under its imprint for many years.

Not all the eight members wrote poetry; three of them hardly attempted it. Of the others, three were major poets. They were Yeshwant (Yaśawanta Dinkara Peṇḍharkar, b. 1899), Girish (Girīśa; real name: Śaṅkara Keśava Kānetkar, 1893–1973) and Madhav Julian (Mādhava Jūlian; real name: Mādhava Trimbaka Paṭwardhana, 1894–1939). Madhav Julian had the most varied gifts. But it was Yashwant and Girish who brought repute to the 'Mandal' and popularity for themselves, with their recitations. The listening was enthusiastic, not just because of the novelty of it, but because the themes and the sentiments appealed to him. The best service of these poets was that they made poetry a respectable vehicle of entertainment and helped remove the deep-rooted, puritanical middle-class distrust of it. The two poets also attempted long poems with fair success.

Madhav Julian was a professor of Persian and among his early publications were a Persian-Marathi dictionary and two renderings of Omar Khayyam. His first major collection of poems was *Gajjalāñjalī* (A Handful of Ghazals, 1932). There is much technical variety in these *ghazals* and love is

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the theme of most of them, though not of all. The form, being regarded as imported, raised eyebrows, and the preponderence of love-poems, though the love was very sober, brought the poet the sneering sobriquet, 'praṇaya-paṇḍharicā wārakarī' (constant pilgrim to the Pandharpur—holy shrine—of love). Other collections of lyrics followed, the poems gradually making more room for themes other than love—like the decay of society, particularly of the Hindus. But social criticism had always engaged the poet, for one of his earliest works was *Sudhāraka* (The Reformer, 1928), a long poem which satirizes the hypocrisy in the upper classes, through an ill-knit story and some effective character sketches. Madhav Julian's earliest long poem, *Virahataraṅga* (Waves of—the anguish of—Separation, 1906) has been generally acclaimed as his best. The 'separation' is of an idealistic young man from the woman he loves, a young widow who has derived from Thomas Hardy an attitude of melancholy. The love is platonic. The poem is, in a sense, one long lyric.

Madhav Julian was for ever experimenting with prosody and diction, a little too self-consciously. His decline as a poet was mainly due to his inability to save the artist in him from mere workmanship—and from such craziness as banning words of Persian or Arabic origin.

Shridhar Balkrishna Ranade (Śrīdhara Bāḷakṛṣṇa Rāṇaḍe, b. 1892) has a relatively small output to show, but his restless spirit would seem to have helped the other members of the Mandal in their search for new ways. As a scientist, he probably brought a critical temper to bear on their work, and his own. In his eighties he came out with poems with science-induced imagery. His *Kāḷācyā Dāḍhetūn* (From the Jaws of Death, 1914) is a longish poem recording what passed through his mind when he lay critically ill. It stands out by its structure and by its awareness of the subconscious. His wife Manoramabai (Manoramābāī, 1896–1926) wrote over 90 poems in the 13 years of writing granted to her. Some of them are about nature, others about domestic happiness. As a person, she gave a touch of 'home' to the Mandal.

A negative good, as it were, achieved by the Ravikiran Mandal was that its idiosyncrasies provoked the best book of parodies in Marathi: *Jheṇḍūcī Phule* (Marigold Flowers, 1925) by P. K. Atre, who was to grow into a literary giant. Not all the poems are, strictly speaking, parodies; several of them are just humorous poems. The book soon brought parody into fashion and the form was ruined by hosts of poetasters attempting it. About the same time as Atre, Jayakrishna Keshav Upadhye (Jayakṛṣṇa Keśava Upādhye, 1893–1937) who has remained neglected in spite of his many gifts, wrote a few good parodies and also a delightful burlesque, in the Vidarbha dialect, of the Krishna-Arjun argument in the Bhagavad Gita.

Nationalist Poetry. Though almost every poet of this and the previous era expressed his nationalist feeling in at least some poems, it had become the principal urge and theme for several poets. Prominent among them were Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (Vināyaka Dāmodara Sāvarakar, 1883–1966) and Govind (Govinda Tryambaka Darekar, 1874–1956). Savarkar, the great revolutionary, was a powerful poet and prose writer. The narrative poem *Kamalā* (1934), composed in the Andaman jail where the poet was serving a life-term, without any writing materials, has a certain grandeur which won the poet the encomium, 'an epic poet who never wrote an epic'. An intense lyric of homesickness written by Savarkar when he was studying in England is deservedly famous. It begins thus:

> Take me back, oh do, to my motherland;
> O sea, my spirit is in agony. (tr.)

As for Govind, many of his patriotic poems were proscribed by the government. He also wrote devotional poems. The two kinds had a link between them, in him and other writers, with patriotism becoming a religion. Ballads extolling the martial deeds of Maratha heroes, and of Rajput ones too, were written in plenty in those days and they were sung to responsive audiences.

But good intentions do not always produce good poetry. Most of the 'nationalist' poetry was rather poor verse. And much of the poetry of the Ravikiran Mandal was mediocre. It was tepid in emotion and didactic in intent; and its 'technical' experiments were, by and large, mechanical and trivial. Its easily imitable ways operated till the end of this period in the work of the lesser poets; even some of the better poets show traces of them. But with the discerning reader the Mandal had become outmoded by the mid-thirties with three poets of remarkable promise making their impact; and when two more poets of that level appeared within the next few years, the Mandal appeared to have gone incurably stale. And these poets had each their individuality.

New Directions. The first of them to strike the scene was Anil (real name: Ātmārama Rāvjī Deśpāṇḍe, 1901–82). Anil's first collection, *Phulawāta* (The Lighted Wick—placed before the deity at home, 1931) had lyrics of young love, the personal ring in which is all the more ardent for its delicacy. For over fifty years Anil continued to write love-poems, showing a steady growth in complexity—particularly in the fusion of thought and feeling. The last collection, *Daśapadī* (ten-line poems, 1976), has a rare blend of maturity and freshness. It also shows another important aspect of the poet: his untiring quest of the new in form and expression. The first to use Free Verse—in *Prema āṇī Jīvaṇa* (Love and Life, 1935, a long lyric), and later in *Bhagnamūrti* (An Idol in Ruins, 1940), a long reflective poem about debility in a nation leading to cultural decay, Anil continued

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to explore the potentialities of the form. The resistance to free verse broke down in a few years' time, and it has been in wide use for over 30 years. *Pertewhā* (The Rain-bird, 1947), and *Sāṅgātī* (The Companion, 1961) are collections of poems which further illustrate the poet's quest for the new. A newness in content stands out in several of the poems which express the poet's hopes and fears about contemporary life. Some of these have an ironic strain; others are more forthright in voicing their anger.

But, look, now are stirring
Earthquakes
The sounds are coming from afar
From the plumbless bowels of the earth
The lava is boiling within;
You who have blossomed pretty above
Remember! underneath
Is a volcano, dormant!

(tr. from *Supta Jwālāmukhī* [The Dormant Volcano])

Behind all such poems is sympathy for the victims of an unjust order wherever it exists.

The tears of all the luckless ones
Well up in our eyes, (tr.)

says the poet. Of such luckless ones in China, oppressed by the Japanese, Anil made a longish poem *Nirvāsita Cinī Mulāsa* (To a Refugee Chinese Boy, 1943). The themes and attitudes, and even the expression, of such poems emphasize, by contrast, the way the Ravikiran Mandal had hedged itself within a narrow sphere. Anil would have been drawn into the Mandal, but he firmly chose his own path: *Dona Vātā* (Two Paths) tells us:

If I had taken the other one, this one would have folded up.
That was not to be; this was my path. (tr.)

Another strikingly individual path was sought, and worked with instant success, by Anant Kanekar (Ananta Kāṇekar, 1905–80) in *Cāndarāta āṇi Itar Kavitā* (The Moonlit Night and Other Poems, 1933). The few romantic poems in the collection are genuine; the rest are anti-romantic in their spirit and content. Ironically enough, the 'moonlight' fades out rather quickly and social protest, satire, irony, parody, and straight atheism take over. 'Enough of these tiresome songs of Krishna's *vyabhīcāra* (illcit love with the *gopis*)', he says bluntly. In 'Donna Deevabhaktā' (Two Devotees of God) the wealthy man, a capitalist, worships the idol solemnly; and the labourer is driven by despair to flinging his down the mill's chimney: he will have nothing to do with 'the policeman in the skies'. Kanekar used living speech—with colloquialisms—in all such poems; and even his 'romantic' poems avoid the syrupy and the over-beautified in their expression. Kanekar virtually gave up writing poetry after the publication of this slim collection, and wrote in several other forms, making a mark in each one of them.

Pure lyricism, unaffected by concern for any problem or the slightest urge for any experimentation, distinguishes the work of N. G. Deshpande (Nāgorāva Ghaṇaśyāma Deśpāṇḍe, b. 1909). Although he had been writing since about 1930, his first collection, *Ṣīḷa*, was not published till 1954. He wrote much but shunned the limelight. Even in the early thirties, however, the recordings of some of his lyrics had been enthusiastically received by lovers of poetry who found in them a lilt, a grace and a pictorial quality that were exciting. The poems sang themselves, as it were; such was their word-music. They were utterly unsophisticated and un-selfconscious. They were truly rural because they had none of the affectations of the 'rural' mode prevalent then. Deshpande's second collection, *Abhisāra* (Lovers' Assignation, 1968), has several lyrics in which the thought gives weight to the feeling; in some of them the thought could be said to be 'metaphysical'. Links with traditional songs can be detected in some of these poems. Deshpande's unpublished work includes three long narrative poems, two of which, based on folk-tales, are authentically romantic.

Another born romantic, whose fifty years of poetry writing—during which he continued to change, to tune himself to the world around him, even to experiment in some ways—have hardly modified his identity, is B. B. Borkar (Balakṛṣṇa Bhagawanta Borkar, b. 1910). His six major collections, the latest of them being *Guitar* (1965), register between them Borkar's growth as a poet. Verses come to him naturally, 'as leaves to a tree', with unforced rhythm, word music and sensuousness. Such facility could be disastrous, but Borkar has a fine restraint too which is partly native to the poet in him and partly absorbed from his close acquaintance with the poetry in several languages, including French and Portuguese. The sensuous sometimes slips into the sensual—as in a beautiful poem, *Japānī Ramalāci Rātra* (A Night of Japanese Witchery, 1947). But he never offends good taste; for, curiously enough he has a strain of moral idealism in him, even of puritanism. He has been a devoted reader of the saint poets and a follower of Gandhiji too. But the moral fervour coexists smoothly in Borkar with his love of beauty—the beauty of woman, as much as of nature—and his addiction to the joy of life in its fullness, and the abandon with which he expresses it all.

One book, making a legend of a poet is what happened in 1942 to Kusumagraj (Kusumāgraja; real name: Vishnu Vaman Shirwadkar, b. 1912), the book being *Viśākhā* (The Visakha constellation). The year is significant. The poems in the book—some, if not all—eloquently expressed the spirit of the year; of protest against slavery and tyranny, of hope of freedom and a new order; and these in relation to

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the peoples, not just ours. There were rave reviews; the poems were recited with fervour, particularly by the young. Verses like the following have been constantly quoted:

Take off your moonlight-arms, dear,
From round my neck;
Beyond the horizon
Stand the heralds of day.

Its million heralds
Will shower their fire on the world;
And in the light we'll look foolish,
And appear guilty.

(tr. from 'Swapnācī Samāptī'
[The End of theDream])

The poet has since published six more collections, but they have had, relatively, no impact. He had earlier (1933) published a slender collection; but it is hardly ever mentioned. Several of the lyrics in *Viśākhā* have no political colour whatsoever. *Smṛti* (Memories) contrasts the hectic life in Bombay with the peaceful old-world life in Nasik which he recalls with an ache of nostalgia. There is the unspoilt adolescence of the love-poems; and the inevitable 'romanticism'—for the age, and the age of the poet—envelops most of the poems like a haze. In fact, the poet himself was romanticized—as the prophet of the 'agnisampradāya' (the creed of fire), and the creed spread like fire. Imagery of fire and light came into vogue. It seemed authentic in Kusumagraj, but contrived in the host of imitators.

There are some effective allegories in *Viśākhā*. 'Prithvīce Premagita' (The love-song of the earth) is one. The earth is languishing for the sun, the symbol of light and strength, and spurns the other planets:

I don't want the pitiful love-play of those weaklings
I prefer to it this remoteness from you. (tr.)

The (brave) mongoose killing the (wicked) snake in a fight—dramatically described in a poem—has an obvious allegorical significance. A typical expression of the poet's dreamlike hope is: 'In the womb of the night is the dawn of the morrow'.

Kusumagraj has continued to develop through the years, as illustrated by the subsequent collections, the most recent of them being *Himareśā* (Lines of Snow, 1964) and *Vādaḷa-vela* (Storm-creeper, 1969). The very titles are characteristic of the poet. But the romantic is now in a lower key; the thought element is a little firmer; the themes are more varied; the diction is simpler and the verse more free. The essential Kusumagraj however is still there: dreamer, champion of noble causes, angered by hypocrisy and corruption. But disenchantment for him

Of those who were inspired by the 'agnisampradaya' of Kusumagraj the most promising was Kant (Kānta; full name: Vāmana Rāmcandra Kānta, b. 1913). Kant has more than fulfilled the promise, for the creed did not keep him confined for long. The titles of his first collections carry the stamp of the creed: *Phatatkāra* (an onomatopoeic word suggesting a whiplash) and *Rudravīṇā* (The Veena of Siva, the Destroyer). His later poems, appearing in three collections—one of which, *Maraṇagandha* (The Odour of Death), has three long poems—indicate a poetic personality that has matured on its own lines. Into its making has gone a strain from Urdu poetry. Shrikrishna Powale (Śrīkṛṣṇa Powale, 1921–74) left behind two collections, *Agniparāga* (The Pollen of Fire)—a title that announces the creed—and *Jaḷamāṭī* (The Mud in the River-bed, 1949), besides many uncollected lyrics. He was endowed with genuine creativity—as seen, for instance, in the sensuousness of his imagery—but not with restraint, and his powers were dissipated.

Some other Significant Poets. G. H. Deshpande (Guṇavanta Hanumanta Deśpāṇḍe, b. 1897) ceased writing lyrics a long time ago, but the 1930s found his poetic manner arresting, with its terse expression and its metaphysical paradoxes reminding one of the saint poets. *Nivedana* (Statement, 1935) is his only publication. K. B. Nikumba (Kṛṣṇa Baḷawant Nikumba, b. 1920), whose first volume of verse, *Ujjwalā* (The Bright One, 1945) showed considerable influence of the Ravikiran Mandal, has been cultivating his skills earnestly. That they are not merely technical skills is seen in his latest book, *Mṛgāvarta* (A Quest for the Return of the Deer), a long allegory with a serious thought content. Raja Badhe (Rājā Baḍhe, 1912–77) showed uncommon talent for his age when, still in his teens, he started writing lyrics, but he channelised it mainly into song-writing. His fine feeling for the sound of words and rhythm, was his main strength; but used for its own sake, it slackened his growth as a poet. The same could be said, in some measure, of Sopandeva Chaudhari (Sopānadeva Caudharī, 1907–82) whose singing of his own poems brought him popularity. His mother, Bahinabai (Bahiṇābāī, 1880–1951) could be called a marvel. Though illiterate, this peasant woman composed *Ovis* (a traditional verse form) with their artless images and simple wisdom, and humour smacking of the soil. These remained in obscurity till after her death. The period had, besides her, a large number of women poets. None of them however were significant, though some were competent.

Third Phase: Modernism and its Many Faces (1947–70)

Life could not be the same after the Second World War. Old certainties were shaken by new questions. Scepticism and disillusionment set in, and with them the ironic attitude. But there were new hopes too, springing from the exciting developments in the sciences and in thought. The old barriers

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were crumbling, opening up unsuspected perspectives. The achievement of freedom did not quite create ecstasy; but even those who were anything but naive had hopes of a better life for the people. These hopes soon began to sour. The disillusion had now a local context which gave it, and the attendant irony, a sharper edge. Inequalities, injustices, cruelty, hypocrisy—all this made for confusion and greater uncertainty; but also for more dynamic attitudes. Not an age for simple creeds and convenient labels.

The poetry of the age reflects these elements, sometimes singly, but more often in a variety of combinations. There are, of course, no 'mandals' or easily identifiable coteries. The important poets of the age lived in a world of their own: each an island. Even where a young poet is stimulated—maybe, even 'influenced'— in his formative years by an older one, he parts company with him when he is fledged; he has no use for a mentor.

Writing poetry is no longer confined to the middle class, and the 'upper' castes. Nor to a few privileged cities and towns. The tremendous spread of education is not the only reason for it. It is the spread of new ideas, of new aspirations, which accounts for it even more; and these were political, or semi-political. In fact, except for the poets who religiously insulated themselves from the life around them —the headliners in the 'art for art's sake' creed—contemporary poetry has in it a good deal of the political (in a broad sense of the word).

Navakāvya: Mardhekar and Rege. 'Navakāvya' (New Poetry) was the term used to describe the kind of poetry that burst upon the readers with almost no forewarning in 1947—through a slight-looking paperback, *Kāhī Kavitā* (Some Poems). Those who welcomed the poetry and those who were shocked by it agreed on calling it 'Navakāvya'. For the latter the term probably had a sarcastic tinge: more 'nava' than 'kāvya'. The controversy fanned out soon to unexpected quarters; to persons and periodicals that had not been suspected of having any concern for poetry. The government prosecuted the poet; and his acquittal nettled the opponents. However, the controversy petered out in a few years and the term 'navakāvya' fell into disuse.

Kāhī Kavitā was the work of B. S. Mardhekar (Bāḷa Sītārāma Marḍhekar, 1909–56). It was followed, in 1952, by *Āṇakhī Kāhī Kavitā* (Some More Poems). The latter shows that the poet had undergone a little change in between. But from *Śiśirāgama* (The Coming of Winter, 1939), the poet's first volume, to these books it was a sea-change. Mardhekar's apprentice work in poetry was apparently guided by the 'Ravikiran Mandal'; and Balkavi's influence on it was deep. Mardhekar's mature work—in which he found himself—repudiated the Mandal, but not Balkavi, with whom he felt he had a spiritual kinship. In fact, the Balkavi strain—innocent, dreamy, joyous—surfacing in his later work occasionally strikes the casual reader as being incongruous; but it is a part of the complexity that is Mardhekar.

A typical poem from *Kāhī Kavitā* is 'Pipāta Mele Ojjī Undira' (The Mice Lie Dead in the Wet Drum). It is a disconcerting allegory: the mice are men—pathetically helpless, for whom

To live is also a compulsion
To die is also a compulsion. (tr.)

Is it misanthropy? No; it was, on the other hand, a painful expression of keen sympathy for the modern man in his predicament. The poem, which had been published a year earlier in a periodical, shocked most readers as much by its crazy-looking phrasing and obscurity as by its content. This and other such poems in both the volumes deals with contemporary reality in a clinical manner; with the degradation of man in different ways—slavery to routine, blunted sensibility, vulgarization of sex and also what man has made of woman. There were no simple solutions, not with all the advances in knowledge, particularly in science. There were mysteries, as of death, which defied the advance: 'In the cremation ground is the fence for my knowledge'. But Mardhekar was not the kind of anti-rationalist who peddles spiritual sedatives. An intellectual, he had great regard for science; though aware of its limitations.

I know that science alone is knowledge
But somewhere there is another pull (tr.)

A yearning for communication with *parama-śakti* (the supreme power) made the poet restless, as seen in some of the poems in *Āṇakhi Kāhī Kavitā*. And yet it was always there. Tukaram and Ramdas, the saint poets, had been absorbed by Mardhekar even to the extent of deriving several elements in his expression, including metrical ones, from them. The modernist in him drew some of his images from contemporary technology; but some also came from rural life and some from drab urban life. The language was of everyday life, English words being used if they were part of such language. Dialect words, as well as Sanskritised words, appropriately used, lent both variety and strength to Mardhekar's diction. Such a mixed diction was sometimes an effective vehicle for irony; parody too served the same purpose. What Mardhekar sought in all his experiments in style was precision; his prayer was: 'Let my feeling have the precision of the laboratory balance'. But language, alas, was not up to it. So another prayer:

Tear up words to tatters
What I've to say
Will then be intact on my lips—
Fully naked, fully naked! (tr.)

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In the work of P. S. Rege (Puruṣottama Śivarāma Rege, 1910–78) 'Navakāvya' took a direction which was very different from that of Mardhekar's. Rege had, in fact, started groping for new ways of poetic expression as early as 1931. But his impact was not felt till the publication of *Himaseka* (Snowfall, 1943) and *Dolā* (The Swing, 1950) and it became stronger with each of the three succeeding collections. Yet it was never as wide as Mardhekar's; nor, probably, as deep. This was because Rege's poetic personality was too self-centred, and his poetic manner too intimate, to invite much following.

Rege rejects the idea of contemporaneity. Poetry, to him, is a self-sufficient, completely autonomous activity, unrelated to the poet's times. He would seal it off from others and make it utterly private. Within the sanctum of this privacy, time stands still; there is no past, no future; it is only the present moment. Even a recollection takes on the immediacy of instant experience.

At the centre of Rege's poetic experience is woman: her inborn graces, her capacity for love, her instinctive understanding. She is a symbol of creativity. She is timeless. The Radha of myth sheds the veil of centuries and pulsates with warm life; and the warmth is of woman, not of any spiritual fervour. And every beloved is a Radha. In fact, in Rege, woman is a physical entity, first and last. His is not a poetry of romantic love, with its foggy variations, but of physical love. And yet, the love is far more impersonal than personal: it is love for woman, for the essential woman. She is compounded of many antecedents: the woman of folk poetry, of a Prakrit work like the *Gāthāsaptaśatī* of Hāla, of erotic Sanskrit poetry and even of western poetry. All these integrate in Rege's woman, *the* woman.

A typical poem of Rege's, and also one of his best, is *Tridhā Rādhā* (Three Facets of Radha). The three facets are: the one bewitched by Krishna; the one who loses herself in Him: and the one who, having thus lost herself, achieves liberation: she is 'vipraśna' (beyond all uncertainties). Only three four-line stanzas, each etching a sharp image, make up this poem. It illustrates two of Rege's great qualities, his vivid imagery and his succinct expression. The latter has two factors: close-knit structure and economy of words. These are the result of meticulous craftsmanship. Rege was for ever ringing changes in his poems—even after publication, mostly in their words. He loved words as he loved woman. He played with them; caressed them, as it were, to draw out their most sensuous evocations. He sometimes quibbled with words; occasionally he loaded them with allusions and sometimes fashioned new words. His diction was apparently simple, but Sanskrit and the *Jñāneśwarī* and the *lāvaṇī* (erotic folk-song) often supplied him with an apt word which, being unexpected, was even more effective. He took the charge of obscurity almost as a compliment. And his later poems tended to be like riddles.

Some other Significant Poets. Vinda Karandikar (full name: Govinda Viṅāyaka Karandīkar, b. 1918) has been an untiring experimenter, every collection of his having its individuality and marking, as it were, a stage in the poet's journey towards perfection. His first, *Svedagaṅgā* (The Ganga of Sweat), shows the influence of Keshavsut (as a poet of agitation), of Madhav Julian, and even of the 'nationalist' poets. In *Mṛdgandha* (The Scent of the Soil, 1954) the poet is more firmly himself—in his lyrical pieces of a personal nature, and those with a socialist ardour. The characteristic rhetoric of the latter kind is best seen in *Tī Janatā Amara Āhe* (The Janata is Deathless):

> For the liberation of the *janata*
> there is yet to be a battle
> The *janata* whose soul is one is deathless. (tr.)

Another eloquent poem *Dātāpāsūna Dātākaḍe* (From Teeth to Teeth) has exploitation for its theme. The next collection, *Dhripada* (The Refrain, 1959) leaves the socialist strain behind. The poems in it fuse deep thought with intense feeling.

> Turn left, turn right
> There is no remedy finally. (tr.)

as a poem in it says. The book provides some well-rewarded experiments in form—as in the *mukta sunīta* (the free sonnet), the *tāla-citra* (word-picture of a 'tāla') and the *ghazal*. *Jātaka* (Horoscope, 1968) has *ghazals* which beautifully blend the lyrical and the musical. It has also a few poems, remarkable ones, on his experiences in the U.S.A. As a poet of love, Karandikar expresses himself candidly, as in the line: 'One should make love like an honest animal, forgetting fear, forgetting haste'. As a writer of children's verse to which he has brought the child's sense of the comic, Karandikar has no rival, though he has dozens of imitators.

Mangesh Padgaonkar (Maṅgeśa Pādgāoṅkar, b. 1929) was in his early twenties when he attracted attention with his first collection of lyrics, *Dhārānritya* (The Dance of Showers, 1950). The poems bear the stamp of Borkar, in their romanticism and their reverence for Gandhiji. As the poet grew, the stamp became less and less distinct; but not the romantic strain which now bears his own stamp. The adolescent idealism of the early poems has lost colour, and the poet has been for some time showing its reverse side, satire—an understandable reversal with the post-freedom years raising high hopes and then blighting them. A gentle expression of the poet's sense of humour is found in his limericks. But the essential Padgaonkar is the romantic—one who is in love with the beauty of nature and records it in soft, musical, colourful verse, and also one who occasionally has the urge to escape from this respectable world. 'There is a gypsy hidden deep in my mind',

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he says in 'Gypsy', the title-poem of one of his popular collections. There is no incongruity between the gypsy and the anti-establishment poet of later years.

'1942' and Kusumagraj fashioned the poet in Vasant Bapat (Vasanta Bāpaṭa, b. 1922), whose *Bijalī* (Lightning, 1952) attracted the young with love lyrics and even more with its fervent poems about the socialistic order one had associated with political freedom. These latter kind were tuneful, some of them reaching large, enthusiastic audiences throughout the region with the 'Rāṣṭra Sevā Dala' including them in its repertoire. Bapat used, and has been using, old forms like the *lāvaṇī* and the *powādā* (ballad) with skill. Later collections, like *Setū* (The Bridge, 1957) and *Akarāvī Diśā* (The Eleventh Direction, 1962) reveal a widening of the poet's interests, a maturing of his native poetical qualities and a growing ability in infusing feeling with thought. At his core, Bapat is an unrepentant romantic, and he is as youthful as ever, whatever his theme: love, or nature, or some ideal.

The element of protest against injustice, with its concomitant vision of a new order, reappears with even greater heat in Sharatchandra Muktibodh (Śaratcandra Mādhave Muktibodha, b. 1921). And it is not diluted with the romantic. If anything, it is stiffened by Marxism. His first collection, *Navī Maḷavāta* (The New Path, 1949), is 'a song of the new age, of the workers'. Typical of the spirit of the poems is: 'A wrathful, stupendous, new sun is blazing in breast after breast'. And another:

> For the wondrous, fervent love of tomorrow
> Today we will shoot burning arrows of hate. (tr.)

The 'fiery' content and imagery continue in the second collection, *Yātrika* (The Pilgrim, 1957), and down to this day, Muktibodh's commitment to his ideology has not dampened with age. But he has also had genuine, lyrical tenderness; it has been less conspicuous, though. A little inconsistently with his radical creed, his diction is unduly Sanskritized—and that too when he has said: 'Discard words which have, like worn-out coins, become worthless'.

Indira (Indira Santa, b. 1914), writing verse since her late teens, had grown out of the early influences into a distinct poetic individuality by the time *Ṣelā* (The Stole, 1950) was published and she has continued to grow, as the four books that followed bear out. Her deceptively simple-looking lyrics fathom a quiet depth of feeling, which calls for rare sensibility. The homely diction reminds one of women's songs conserved by oral tradition. Love is a recurrent theme, but its expression is reticent. Death brought a very early end to the union of the lovers, so that it is reminiscences of the union that make the theme, but there is nothing mushy, self-pitying, about these poems. The 'being-left-alone' is, as it were, a positive state and a challenge. As Indira grew, her imagery became more concentrated. As seen in *Mendi* (Henna, 1967) and *Mrgajala* (Mirage, 1957), her best collections, it sometimes glows with a suggestion of the supernatural. And her intensely personal poems, whether they are about love or nature, have an unearthly beauty which one might call mystic. She would seem to be very different from Mardhekar and yet, as she herself says, she was deeply impressed, even 'awakened', by his poems.

Of the several other women poets of the age who have shown considerable technical skill and a distinct individuality, even though there are traces of the influence of one or more of the major poets, special mention should be made of Padma (full name: Padmā Goḷe, b. 1913) whose lyrics have a fine restraint and a genuinely personal ring, and Shanta Shelke (Śāntā Śeḷake, b. 1921), the musical quality of whose verse has brought her wide response.

A poet who scrupulously kept his identity from being swayed by any of his celebrated contemporaries, and who nursed his special talents into constant growth was Sadanand Rege (Sadānanda Rege, 1923–82). His growth is noticed in his five collections of lyrics—beginning with *Akṣarwela* (A Creeper of Syllables, 1957). His most striking talent is for whimsy. His imagery reveals a fancy which is powerful, but well-controlled as well; and his expression is pithy. Some of his excellent poems of recent years relate to the life of Christ, which has also been the source of several of his telling images.

A lyricist of rare gifts whose lyrics were lapped up by filmdom and singers, as much as by the common reader, was G. D. Madgulkar (Māḍaguḷakar, 1919–78). He had been schooled far more by the poetry of the saints, and the *lāvaṇī* and other varieties of folk poetry, than by the work of the moderns. That he was much more than a songwriter was borne out by his first collection, *Jogiyā* (a 'raga' in music, 1956) and even more by the *Gīta-Rāmāyaṇa* (dramatic episodes from the Ramayana distilled into lyrics) which was broadcast by the All India Radio, a lyric a week, for a whole year (1955), casting a spell on lakhs of listeners. Manmohan Natu (Manamohana Nātū, b. 1913) has been a poet for the few: the few who can recognize the originality in content and expression flashing through his eccentricities.

Since 1960. The poets who dominated the scene after 1960 had been, with an exception or two, writing for several years; that is, the earlier period had formed them, in some measure—and that without their necessarily being aware of it. By the early sixties however had come up some young poets of great promise whose formative years were marked by the first flush of 'new' poetry. And yet each one of them had his particular newness. While the 'established' poets continued to enrich their reputation, these young poets made theirs independently. The first of them to make his—and he made it while still in his teens—was Dilip Chi

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(Dilīpa Citre, b. 1938). His was a sharp break—rather like the one Mardhekar had effected. The following lines are from one of the poems in his first volume, *Kavitā* (Poems, 1960):

In the eyes of prophets is a screw of light
Fixed fast. They can't see the darkness
In their own lungi. . . . .
. . . . . When the prophets come
Dogs don't bark. Only their tails waggle
Like journalists, their tongues loll out
And the saliva drips long-winded
Like the leading article.

(tr. from 'Preśitāncyā Ḍoḷyūta Asato' [There is in the Eyes of Prophets])

The early Chitre was shaped by Mardhekar; and also by Karandikar, and by a very different kind of poet—Borkar. Maybe, even by Rege and some others, including European poets. But these diverse influences were so smoothly integrated in Chitre that none of them stuck out; they fertilized his poetic powers. And the abiding impression his poems give is of originality: an originality that sparkles through structure and diction and imagery. Thought and feeling do not appear as different elements in him. As with Rege, words are 'the thing' to him. His finest splendour comes from the way he manipulates them. Almost as fine is his use of irony and paradox.

Another poet with an array of poetic gifts was Arati Prabhu (Āratī Prabhū; real name: C. T. Khanolkar, 1930-76). He is nothing if not intense: intense in feeling and imagery and diction. The springs of most of his imagery were in the lonely, early years spent in southern Konkan; its dark forests, its eddying streams, its superstitions, give his images a sense of mystery—sometimes a touch of the eerie too. But there is nothing hazy about the images; they are sharp and shimmering. They shimmer in the gloom that hangs on the scene, a gloom that has intimations of death.

Am I a whole tree,
Or a negligible leaf,
My ashes will tell you
When I am burnt out. (tr.)

This is from a poem in his last collection, *Nakṣatrānce Deṇe* (The Gift of the Stars, 1975). In the last poem in the volume, a gardener says:

Bare I came here
I leave in bloom
Bid me farewell with love. (tr.)

'The numbed star with a throbbing pain in the dark gloom', 'Blue-black regret shivering in the still water', 'The sky crippled by its strange sorrow'—these are characteristic images. And yet what the suffering Arati Prabhu writes about is not his own; it is impersonal, universal. There is no tragic posture. Arati Prabhu's first collection was *Jogawā* (Alms, 1959), and second *Divelāgaṇa* (Twilight Time, 1962).

Narayan Surve (Nārāyaṇa Surve, b. 1926) was a phenomenon: the man as well as his poetry. He came from Bombay's slums, and the raw life shaped his poetry. Several of his themes come from that life, and some of his language too: its directness and slang. His radicalism is no mere 'ism' but is derived from his experiences. The poetry of protest against inequalities and injustice had been, till Surve appeared on the scene, an expression of the earnest sympathy or anger of middle-class idealists; the lesser poetry of the kind expressed pity. The poetry of Surve, and of other dispossessed men like him during recent years, has made a mockery of the latter, making much of the former sound a little unreal. There is no self-pity in such poetry either. It does not try to 'poetize' suffering; it does not varnish its language. Since his first collection, *Aisā Gā Mī Brahma* (And I am Brahma, 1962), Surve has been growing as a poet, as his two other collections, *Māze Vidyāpīṭha* (My University, 1966) and *Jāhiranāmā* (Manifesto, 1975) show.

In 1966, a series presenting new poets brought two glad surprises for the perceptive reader. One was *Rānātalyā Kavitā* (Poems from the Farm) by N. D. Mahanor (full name: Nārāyaṇa Dhoṇḍo Mahānora, b. 1942) and the other *Sandhyākāḷacyā Kavitā* (Poems of the Evening) by Grace (real name: Māṇika Goḍaghāṭe, b. 1937). And the poets were quite unlike each other. Mahanor is a farmer; he lives on his farm in an obscure village. So 'nature' is not an escape to this poet, nor a literary fashion, not even an embellishment. The very first poem in the collection tells us of the farm creating in him such a fond attachment to itself that the two 'laughed and cried together', sharing joys and sorrows; 'And now my being is so involved in it that I have become the voice to its green speech'. And to this 'voice', folk poetry—particularly the *lāvaṇī*—has given its strength and graces. The flavour of rural speech, an unforced imagery—blossoming from that lovely setting of farm and forest—and an inherent singing quality stir a prompt warm response in the reader. Mahanor has published only one more collection of poems since his first; and it has the freshness of his early lyrics.

The poetry of Grace has no such identifiable setting; it seems to have no external context. It is so utterly centred in the poet himself and is, in that sense, 'pure' poetry. It mostly speaks through images, and the images are subtle and condensed—even telescoped; they do not yield their significance to the reader easily. The expression is uncompromisingly, even defiantly, terse. But the groping reader is struck by the lyrical intensity and the verbal music, as also by the rapport with nature.

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Several significant poets of the seventies had made an impact in the sixties although their works had not appeared in book form. For example, Vasant Abaji Dahake (Vasanta Ābājī Dahāke, b. 1942) and Suresh Bhat (Sureśa Bhaṭ, b. 1932). Bhat's *ghazals* have brought him wide, and deserving, popularity with their verbal felicity and their striking, if repeated, use of dramatic paradox. Dahake expresses the alienation, the irrelevance and the sense of 'imprisonment' felt by contemporary man reminding us, if fitfully, of such precursors as Mardhekar and Chitre. Loneliness, but of a more personal kind than Dahake's, is a recurring note in Gurunath Dhuri (Gurunātha Dhurī, b. 1942), who also writes of love in a truly lyrical vein.

A movement which was getting under way then, and was to achieve strength and compel serious attention in the seventies, drew some sustanance from the 'little' magazines. That was the 'Dalita' movement which spoke spiritedly of the sufferings and demands of the 'scheduled castes', the downtrodden ('dalita') for centuries. Its defiance is of course socio-political; but it has used poetry, and literature generally, as an effective weapon. Among the leading poets of the movement are Nāmadeva Ḍhaśāḷa, Dayā Pawār, Keśava Meśrāma and Yaśwanta Manohara, each of them a poet in his own right and all of them banded together by their common agitational role; a role which brings to mind the Father of Modern Poetry, Keshavsut.

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Oriya

JATINDRA MOHAN MOHANTY

Early Decades

The First Major Poet: Radhanath Ray. The beginning of modern Oriya poetry can be traced to the last quarter of the 19th century. The first major poet was Rādhānāth Ray (1848–1908), who was born in Balasore district in north Orissa. He belonged to a Bengali family and his early poetical compositions were in Bengali. He later switched to Oriya. Though Orissa was at that time a part of the Bengal Presidency, western education came to Orissa only towards the middle of the 19th century bringing with it new ideas and a new spirit of education.

A teacher by profession, Radhanath in time became an Inspector and later, an important figure in the Orissa Education Service. His poetic efforts were in part the product of the compulsions of his job, or, more broadly speaking, the compulsions of the time—the need to cater to a taste different from what had hitherto grown up on traditional poetry and literature. In fact, this was Radhanath's greatest significance as a writer. He not only responded to this need for a change in taste, but also successfully established a new taste for a new form of literature, on which subsequently the entire edifice of modern Oriya poetry was built up.

Radhanath mainly wrote long poems. These were both narrative and descriptive, and he frequently mixed both styles. The most important of these poems was *Mahāyātrā* (The Last Journey, 1896). This poem was planned as an epic, on lines similar to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Michael Madhusudan Dutta's *Meghanād Badha*. It was written in blank verse, the first such use in Oriya. The poem deals with the last journey (*Mahāprasthān*) of the Pandavas, their journey from place to place, and how, by the grace of the Fire God (Agni), atop the Sahyadri mountains (in the

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Vindhya range), they got a glimpse of the future of India up to the point in time when the country would be possessed by the followers of Kali (Devil) and would be overrun by the Muslim invaders,—'As he said the sky was filled with great darkness and monstrous, fearsome shapes danced along. And the Kali descended from above with all his followers. And his eyes flashed ominous, like the tail-end of a huge comet and he burned red like Mars, and equally fearful. His sharp teeth moved as if in the whirlwind of a mouth like the ever-moving saw of death. ...' One important aspect of *Mahāyātrā*'s structure is that it was very much rooted in Orissa's cultural landscape and gave a comprehensive account of Orissa, its places and persons and its manifold natural beauties—a type of poetic preoccupation that had never been seen in Oriya poetry before. This last aspect was best seen in *Cilikā* (1892), a descriptive poem about the lake Chilika, on the east coast, south of Puri. This poem gives a detailed account of many places in and around Chilika as well as a description of its remarkable natural beauty. This is how the poet describes the time when the sun sets over Chilika:

> Now Lord Sun sets his golden throne on the top of valery in the West. As the cattle return home the noise of bells round their necks fill the valley and echo in the forest-path. The smoke rises from hamlets below and curls through the forest. The white-feathered eras leave the lake to find their nests in the forest, and their wings look golden as the yellow setting sun falls on them.
>
> (tr.)

In fact, the consciousness of Orissa, not simply as a geographical land mass, but as a living entity with colour and beauty, rich and healthy, formed a major aspect of Radhanath's poetry and opened new vistas for his successors. The poet, however, can also be bitingly satirical and on such occasions he contrasts the beauty and coherence of nature with the incoherence and ugliness of human beings. His poem *Darabāra* (The Court, 1897) is the best example of such merciless exposure.

Darabāra was the last of Radhanath's major poems and was the only poem that dealt directly with contemporary Oriya society. Its setting was the gathering at Cuttack of the feudatory kings of Orissa as well as other rich important people, to felicitate the new Lt. Governor of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. The poem is a commentary on and analysis of people, their manners and their ways of living. The followers of Kali, as visualized in *Mahāyātrā*, are manifested here in the people who have come to pay court to the new governor and receive titles. But the final poetic vision is one of understanding and wisdom: 'Don't let yourself rot in the dark holes of pride. Rise slowly to the hill of dharma. In the eyes of dharma, all things of the world are equal, as trees below appear equal from a hill-top.' *Darabāra*, especially in its approach and attitudes, may be traced to English poetry, particularly to Pope's poetry and Augustan satirical verse. But the poet's emphasis on morality and goodness, and particularly on the inevitable equalizer at the end, are central to Indian thought and the Indian approach to life.

Before *Darabāra*, Radhanath wrote a number of other long poems. They included *Kedāragauri* (1886), *Candrabhāgā* (1886), *Nandikeśwarī* (1887), *Uṣā* (1888), *Pārbati* (1892), *Jajātikeśarī* (1895) and *Urbaśi* (1897). The themes of most of these poems are borrowed from the West. Thus *Kedāragauri* is based on the tragic story of Pyramus and Thisbee, *Candrabhāgā* on Appollo's pursuit of Daphne, and *Uṣā* on Atlanta's race. *Nandikeśwarī* has echoes of Ovid and Byron in it, *Pārbati* of Aeschylus and Shakespeare, and *Jajātikeśarī* of Ovid. Despite the borrowings and echoes, all these stories as well as the characters and their actions have been so completely integrated into Orissa's history, geography and environment, that in later years legends have grown up relating to places mentioned in these poems by the poet.

Radhanath effected a change in taste and approach as well as in literary sensibility and style. To that extent he must be considered a major poet, in the sense Eliot called Dryden and Wordsworth major poets of English literature. At a different level, particularly in his contemplation of the human predicament not only as related to the immediate socio-cultural situations, but also to the larger spheres of the growth of civilization and its attendant evils, Radhanath's perception was acute. In this, he was on a par with his friend and fellow-writer Phakir Mohan Senapati, the novelist. Together they were responsible for the subsequent growth of a new and modern Oriya literature.

Radhanath's Contemporaries. Radhanath's friend, contemporary and fellow-poet, whose name is most frequently associated with his, is Madhusudan Rao (Madhusūdan Rāo, 1853–1912). He belonged to a Maharashtrian family domiciled in Orissa. After completing his education at Cuttack, he became a schoolteacher, and rose to senior administrative positions in the Educational Service. He accepted the Brahmo faith and this contributed a meditative and contemplative outlook to his life and poetry. As a result, his poetry as a whole was responsible, as Radhanath's was not, for introducing a mystic and religious dimension in Oriya poetry.

Unlike Radhanath, Madhusudan excelled in short lyrics and sonnets. These poems were mainly written and published between 1875 and 1908. Most of his work has been collected in six volumes: *Kabitābaḷī* (Collection of Poems, 1875) containing 10 poems; *Cāndamāḷa* (A Garland of Rhymes, 1880–81), Part I and Part II, which together contain 30 poems; *Basantagāthā* (The Ballads of Spring, 1901) which contains 27 poems; *Utkaḷagāthā* (The Ballads of

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Utkal, 1908), which contains seven poems; and *Bibidhakabitā* (Miscellaneous Poems, 1915) containing 11 poems. In addition, he wrote a semi-mystical poem called *Himācaḷe Udaya Utchab* (The Festival of the Rising Sun in the Himalayas, 1911) where the poet's mystic understanding is seen in the union with the Eternal Soul, out of which flows unique beauty and happiness:

> The strange and mysterious touch fills my heart with great happiness; a paradise like incense spills from the arbours of my soul with the happiness of spring; and my soul, my beginning and my end, are all immersed in that eternal fountain of beauty that has no beginning and no end. (tr.)

When looked at, as a whole, his poems show three main poetic-responses. One relates to mysticism or a poetic understanding of a divine existence in man's life and living. The second relates to nature and a sensitivity to natural objects such as the sky, rivers, trees, flowers or even the rural setting. And the third is an expression of patriotic sentiments relating to the poet's own country. He is popularly known as 'Bhaktakabi', the 'Devotee-Poet'.

Another important contemporary of Radhanath is Gaṅgādhar Meher (1862–1924). Gangadhar was born in Sambalpur district, in western Orissa. Though slightly younger, he was nevertheless a good friend of Radhanath and was much influenced by his poetry. Gangadhar was born in a weaver's family and did not have much formal education, though he educated himself in Sanskrit, Bengali and ancient Oriya literature. The result is that his poetry does not have the sophistication and ingenuity found in Radhanath's poetry. Gangadhar's poetry is simpler, more musical, and in manner and approach more inclined towards ancient Oriya poetry. At the same time, while Radhanath borrowed his themes from the West, Gangadhar's sources were Indian mythology and Sanskrit literature. Gangadhar wrote long narrative poems as well as short ones. But like Radhanath, and unlike Madhusudan, he excelled in his longer poems.

His first important narrative poem, *Indumati* (1893), dealt with the story of King Aja and his queen Indumati. Subsequently he wrote *Kīcakabadha* (The Killing of Kichak, 1903), *Padmini* (1911), *Tapaswinī* (The Nun, 1914) and *Praṇayaballari* (The Creepers of Love, 1915). All these were long narrative poems and the poet's reputation largely rests on them. *Tapaswinī*, his best work, is also one of the best poetical works in Oriya literature and probably one of the most popular. It is in 11 cantos and deals with the life of Sita in Valmiki's *āśram* during her banishment. Though the general framework is taken from the Ramayana, this Oriya version is largely an original work. The originality may be seen in the arrangement of sequences in the cantos, in imagining nature as a living being, and in assessing Sita's feelings in an atmosphere of deep pathos and compassion. Besides, the poet is keen on establishing moral attitudes to life which he does by projecting the great physical and moral beauties of Sita.

Gangadhar also wrote a number of short poems, some of them very short and on casual topics. Three collections may be noticed. They are, *Kabitā Kalloḷa* (Waves of Poetry, 1912), *Arghyathāḷi* (The Plate of Offering, 1919) and *Kabitāmāḷa* (The Garland of Poetry, 1923). Gangadhar's talent, as revealed in these uneven collections and in his major works, is homely and intimate, and to one coming from the intense heat of Radhanath it provides cool comfort.

Radhanath's poetic powers also influenced Nandakishor Bal (Nandakiśora Baḷa, 1885–1928), a poet 27 years his junior, but who wrote at least three long, narrative poems in the manner of Radhanath. Nandakishor, unlike Gangadhar, was born in an aristocratic landed family in Cuttack district. He served in the Education Department, travelled widely and had an intimate knowledge of Orissa's rural life. In addition to three long poems entitled *Sītābanabās* (Sita's Banishment, 1902), *Kruṣṇakumāri* (1901) and *Śarmiṣṭhā* (1916), all emphasizing sorrowful life, he wrote several lyrics or short poems which have been collected in a number of volumes: *Pallicitra* (Pictures of Village, 1898), *Nirjhariṇi* (The Stream, 1900), *Basantakokiḷa* (The Cuckoo of Spring, 1901), *Cārucitra* (Beautiful Pictures, 1902), *Janmabhūmi* (Motherland, 1903, 1908), *Nirmālya* (Offerings, 1903) *Prabhātasaṅgīta* (Morning Song), *Sandhyāsaṅgīta* (Evening Song), *Taraṅgiṇī* (The River, 1916), *Nānābāyāgīta* (Nursery Rhymes, 1915) and *Anyānya-Kabitā* (Other Poems). As a large number of these poems deal with Nature in the rural setting, rural life, and the people who live in rural areas, Nandakishor is popularly known as 'Pallikabi' or the poet of rural life.

Three other contemporaries of Radhanath who made noteworthy contributions to modern Oriya poetry were: Phakīrmohan Senāpati (1843–1918), a very powerful novelist and story-teller who also wrote a number of poems; Gobinda Rath (1848–1918), also a prose-writer; and Cintāmaṇi Mohānty (1867–1944), who was also a novelist. Phakirmohan's poetic output was immense, but a large part of it was devoted to translations, particularly from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. He wrote a long, narrative poem on the birth of the Buddha, called *Baudhābatār Kāvya* (Incarnation of the Buddha, 1909) and a large number of lyrics which have been collected in *Puṣpamālya* (The Garland of Flowers, 1894), *Upahār* (Presentations, 1895), *Abasarabāsare* (In the Retirement, 1908), *Pūjāphula* (Flowers for Worship, 1912), *Pṛārthanā* (Prayer, 1912) and *Dhūḷi* (Dust, 1912). These collections comprise many nature poems and poetry dealing with domestic love, religious devotion and social situations of inequality and suffering. But in a verse-travelogue called *Utkaḷa Bhramaṇa* (Travels through Orissa, 1892) and, subsequently, in assorted

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ed poems like *Mo Hātabāhudā* (As I Return from the Market) and *Utkaḷ Kṛuṣak* (The Farmers of Orissa), etc. Phakirmohan is one with Radhanath in satirical anger and aggression, though to a large extent, without his poetic vision and profundity. Gobinda Rath mainly borrowed Phakirmohan's style of writing and wrote on casual topics and excelled in satires. One of his poems *Lāt-darśan* (Seeing the Governor) was composed in 1888, on the occasion of the visit of Sir Stuart Colvin Belley, the then Lt. Governor of the Bengal Presidency, to Orissa. Chintamani Mohanty continued the Radhanath-style of writing and largely imitated his *kāvyas* in his own narrative and descriptive poems. Some of these are, *Śatadaḷa* (Hundred Petals, 1902), *Ganjām Bhramaṇa* (The Travels through Ganjam, 1906), *Meghāsana* (1908), *Dharākot Darśan* (On Seeing Dharakot, 1909), *Sisupāḷbadha* (The Killing of Sisupal, 1909), *Sāḷindi* (1912), *Udyānakhaṇḍa* (1912), *Āryabāḷa* (The Arya Women, 1914), *Kaḷpalatā* (1915) and *Subhadrā* (1920).

The Satyabadi School

The growth and spread of Indian nationalism in the later part of the 19th century and particularly in the early decades of the 20th, resulted in the creation of a very outspoken nationalistic voice in contemporary Oriya poetry. This was mainly the work of a group of poet-reformer-politicians whose combined creative work resulted in a socio-literary movement popularly known as the 'Satyabādi Movement'. The name of the movement was taken from Satyabadi, a place near Puri, where, under the leadership of Gopabandhu Das, these nationalists established a rural residential school in 1909.

Gopabandhu Das. Gopabandhu Das (1877–1928), the eldest of the group, was a fine poet. His earliest book was probably *Abakāśa Cintā* (Thoughts in Leisure, 1899), which consisted of 39 short lyrics mainly dealing with nationalistic sentiments and religious feelings. Gopabandhu's other important books are *Kārākabitā* (Poems in the Prison, 1928), a collection of 13 poems; *Bandīr Ātmakathā* (The Autobiography of a Prisoner, 1923), a long, mainly socio-political poem in six sections and *Dharmapada* (1924), a story-poem based on the legend of a young boy who helped to complete the Konarka temple and subsequently sacrificed his life in a bid to save the lives of 1200 masons of his community. Gopabandhu's nationalistic sentiments are best seen in *Bandīr Ātmakathā* and in lines such as:

Let my body mingle in the country's dust
Let my countrymen walk on my back
Let all the holes in the country's path to freedom
Be filled with my bone, blood and flesh;
Let people advance towards freedom
As I sacrifice my life ever after.... (tr.)

Nilakantha Das and Godabaris Misra. Two other important figures of this group were Nilakantha Das (Nīḷakaṇṭha Dās, 1884–1967) and Godabaris Misra (Godābariś Miśra, 1886–1956). Nilakantha's most important book is *Koṇārke* (At Konarka, 1947). Its two parts consist of, first, a collection of short poems called 'Rāmacaṇḍire Rāti O Śakāḷa' (The Night and Morning at Ramachandi), and next, a long narrative poem, called 'Māyādebi'. The first part records the poet's feelings and emotions on a stormy, full-moon night and on the following calm, quiet morning at Konarka, where the poet as a teacher had led a group of boys on an excursion. The poet's tone is a mixture of exultation and sorrow, particularly relating to the past glory of the land. This is how he ruminates:

And hundreds of mountain forts
will dance before the eyes
And farmers' army will rise
in villages, cities and forests;
As trumpets will sound from forests and valleys
The echoes will roll to distant mountains and rivers;....
Then as the sky becomes red over Jatia
Hundreds of ships will rise in Chilika
And the prisoners will sing the songs of glory
And the warriors will raise their swords in unison. (tr.)

The second part narrates the tragic love story of Narasimha Deb (the young prince who in his later years built Konarka) and Maya Devi, a banished princess, and how as a consequence of this love the temple of Konarka was built. The book, written in a racy, idiomatic language, is a landmark in Oriya poetry. In addition, Nilakantha wrote a long, narrative poem *Khārabeḷa* (1921), based on Kharavela, the 1st century Oriya emperor, and also translated Tennyson's *Princess* and *Enoch Arden*, in lucid, graceful Oriya verse.

Godabaris mainly excelled in writing lyrical poems and ballads. All such poems of his have been collected in three volumes, *Ālekhikā* (Pictures, 1923), *Kaḷikā* (The Bud, 1921) and *Kisaḷaya* (The Leaves, 1922). These poems mainly communicate a longing wistfulness and are written in an easy conversational language and show a sensitive, lonely soul. A very popular poem is *Kāḷyāi* (1923), a musical ballad with intense though tragic human touches. The poem narrates the origin of a goddess named Kalijai (Jai being the name of the girl who was drowned in the lake Chilika), whose temple stands in the middle of Chilika.

The poets of the 'Satyabādi' group had a distinct political orientation. Their poetry, in the third decade of the 20th century, infused into Oriya poetry a consciousness of the nationalistic spirit and urge for freedom. In spite of its elements of romantic wistfulness, this poetry brought about a contemporary awareness of the misery and humiliation suffered due to a foreign rule.

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Romantic Poetry

For about 30 years, from the mid-twenties till about the mid-fifties, Oriya poetry grew mainly in two different directions. But these directions were not always exclusive of each other and in several cases could be seen side by side as integrating factors in the total poetic achievement of a single poet. The first direction was towards a romantic apprehension of life, with the poets concentrating on such things as nature, love, adoration of beauty and spiritual and mystical feelings. At best this created a body of poetry which brought freshness and vigour to the contemporary atmosphere by emphasizing the individual's imaginative faculties and emotional reach. Occasionally, however, this degenerated into romantic mellifluousness and incomplete and inchoate apprehension of emotions. The second direction was towards a socio-political awareness, a direct product of the nationalistic consciousness of the 'Satyabādi' group. It remained close to reality, particularly to the changing patterns of the socio-political life of the thirties and forties. Its structure was generally satirical and in many cases, it exhibited a tone of resentment and anger. To the first group belong poets like Padmacaraṇ Paṭṭanāyak (1885–1956), Kuntalā Kumāri Sābata (1900–38), Kālindī Caraṇ Pāṇigrāhī (b. 1901), Baikuṇṭhanāth Paṭṭanāyak (1904–78), Māyādhar Mānsinha (1905–73) and Rādhāmohan Gadanāyak (b. 1911). The second group includes Lakṣmikānta Mahāpātra (1889–1953), Godābariś Mahāpātra (1897–1966), Ananta Paṭṭanāyak (b. 1910) and Saccidānanda Rāutrāya (b. 1918).

Like the earlier 'Satyabādi' poetry, the new romantic poetry was also the creation of an egocentric poetic movement that was founded towards the end of the twenties. This was mainly the work of Kalindi Charan Panigrahi and Baikunthanath Pattanayak and some of their friends, pre-eminent among whom was Annadāśaṅkar Ray who later switched completely to Bengali. They brought out a manifesto and called themelves 'Sabuja' (The Green) and their poetic movement 'Sabuja Āndolaṅa' (The Green Movement). In conformity with this, they published a poetry-anthology entitled *Sabuja-Kabitā* (Green Poetry, 1931). Two poems in it by Annadaśaṅkar, 'Praḷaya Preraṇa' (Incentive to Deluge, 1924) and 'Sṛujana Swapna' (Creative Dream, 1924) set a tone of high rhetoric and youthful exuberance which subsequent poets tried to follow.

Baikunthanath Patnaik. The more important poets, however, drew the attention of the readers to the qualities of poetic emotion and imagination. Baikunthanath's poems were specially remarkable for this. His poems, written over a period of about 40 years, from the middle of the second decade to the middle of the sixth, have been collected in three volumes, *Aruṇaśri* (The Graces of Dawn), *Kābyasancayan* (A Collection of Poetry, 1943) and *Uttarāyaṇa* (The Movement towards North, 1963). A general appreciation of nature, love and beauty may be seen in many of his poems. In addition, a mystic contemplation of life is present together with an awareness of its hard realities. His language is often lyrical and the poems show a perfect sense of rhyme and rhythm. A good example is 'Yātrāsamgīta' (The Songs of Journey), from *Kābyasancayan*. It is lyrical as well as mystical in tone and narrates the protagonist's desire to move away from a rotting, decaying life ('the winter's tree with faded leaves') to blossoming nature, full of eternal life and eternal dance. At the same time he has written poems like *Sahidbandanā* (Worshipping the Martyrs), *Rickṣāwālā* (1936) and *Umā* (1941) which draw the attention of the reader to the poverty and misery around him.

Mayadhar Mansinha. Mayadhar Mansinha (Māyādhar Mānsiṁha), another important poet belonging to this group, was a prolific writer. He wrote six long poems and innumerable short ones which have been collected in 14 volumes. His general approach to life, like Baikunthanath's, is one of romantic understanding. This is seen in his repeated references to nature and nature's beauty, love, particularly young adolescent love, and to a semi-mystical perception of the power that exists in nature and controls life. Thus love is the dominant note in such poetical collections as *Dhūpa* (Incense, 1931), *Hemapuṣpa* (Golden Flowers, 1935), *Hemasasya* (Golden Crop, 1935) and long poems like *Upekhitā* (The Ignored Lady, 1928), *Nikwaṇa* (The Anklet), *Śubhadruṣṭi* (The First Look, 1930) and *Sādhabajhia* (The Trader's Daughter, 1946). Similarly a semi-mystical feeling is the dominant feature in the poems of *Akhyata* (Rice Particles, 1947), *Jibancitā* (Life's Pyre, 1947), *Kruśa* (The Cross, 1956) and *Bindu O Sindhu* (The Atom and the Sea, 1962). A different aspect of Mayadhar Mansinha's poetry is seen in his socio-political poems which have been collected in *Bāputarpaṇ* (Offerings to Bapu), *Māṭibāṇi* (The Songs of the Soil, 1947) and *Swarājyāśram*. His long poem *Kamaḷāyana* (The Story of Kamala, 1947), which is about the activities and sacrifices of a patriotic social worker, is also a good example of this type of poetry. Mansinha, like Baikunthanath, however, excels in romantic poetry and his poems dealing with love, nature and Orissa's history are better than his other poems. A good example is the sonnet entitled 'Hemanta Prabhāt' (Autumn Morning) from *Hemasasya*:

Autumn morning,
The rising sun has created a mosaic of golden rays
In the body of green nature;
The soft, golden rays have fallen on tree-tops
Like a loose golden dress,
Below on earth
Millions of dews like diamonds tremble
On grass, on leaves,

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And all around the loud noise of rainbow-coloured festivals.
Quiet sky,
Quiet, cool wind,
Only the pitiful cry of love-lorn dove from the distant forest;
And my lady entered,
Fresh from bathing,
A bright sweetness of golden autumn! (tr.)

Kalindi Charan Panigrahi. Kalindi Charan Panigrahi wrote short lyrics. Some of his important collections are *Churiṭiye Lodā* (A Knife is Needed, 1939), *Khyaṇikasatya* (Momentary Truth, 1949), *Mane Nāhim* (I Don't Remember, 1947) and *Mahādīpa* (The Great Lamp, 1948). Love and nature, memories of the past, hopes of a bright future and an anger against the small, mean life around him are his main poetic themes. His poems have an imaginative wholeness as well as a compact rhythmic structure. Thus a poem like *Mane Nāhim* tells in a melancholic fashion how the sweet graces as well as the people of the past are forgotten and no longer exist. On the other hand, a poem like *Mahādīpa* proclaims how the light of hope will spread through the universe like the great lamp of Lord Siva dispelling darkness.

Radhamohan Gadanayak is also reputed for his lyricism and rhyming structures. His first published work was a verse drama, entitled *Kāḷidās* (1933). Subsequently his poems have been collected in 10 volumes, among which *Kābya Nāyikā* (The Poetry Heroine, 1945) remains the best. His poetic themes are broadly the same as Baikunthanath's and Mansinha's—a young poet's preoccupation with love, nature and a semi-mystic perception of unknown forces in life, along with vague desires to escape from its turmoil. But he has also written ballads using incidents and characters from Orissa's and India's past. The other well-known poet of this period, Kuntala Kumari Sabat, spent most of her time in Delhi. Her poetry is full of patriotic sentiments—a pride in Orissa and in the Oriyas as well as an anger against any feeling of inferiority. But she was basically a mystic poet and her poems, collected in six volumes (published between 1922 and 1930)—*Añjaḷi* (The Offering, 1922), *Uchwāś* (The Emotions, 1924), *Arcaṅā* (Worship, 1927), *Sphuliṅga* (The Spark, 1929), *Āhwāna* (The Call, 1930) and *Premacintāmaṇi* (Love's Jewel, 1930)—speak of her love for the unknown lover and co-ordinator of life.

Socio-Political Poetry

Along with the movement towards achieving romantic sensibility in the thirties and forties, there grew, almost on parallel lines, a desire to define poetically the socio-political realities. This proceeded on two levels. The first level was the inspiration of certain social ideals mainly borrowed from the west, such as the Marxist ideals of contemporary Europe. This was mostly seen in the work of two poets, Ananta Pattanayak and Saccidānanda Rāutrāya. The second level was independent of any ideals. It was more analytical, in the sense that whereas in the first level the emotional structure was largely unspecific, in this case closer attention was paid to contemporary problems which were scrutinized within a structure of satire. The two important poets who should be mentioned in this connection were Lakshmikanta Mahapatra and Godabarish Mahapatra.

Nabayuga Sahitya Samsad. Ananta Pattanayak's poetry provided the take-off point for the new progressive poetry. Apart from providing the poetic voice for 'Nabayuga Sāhitya Samsad', a literary organization of young progressive writers (1935), he also wrote independently. Even though he was influenced by Gandhian nationalism his ideals by and large remained Marxist-oriented. This can be seen in many of his poems. For example, in *Āre Durbhāgā Deś* (Oh, My Unfortunate Country, 1936) he is very specific:

The revolution knocks at the door
The poor comes to help the poor
The proletariats fight....
And oh my country,
Search for the source of life
Search for revolution. (tr.)

The poems of Pattanayak have been collected in seven volumes, including a group of poems on Gandhiji's death (1949).

The second important poet in this field was Sachidananda Rautraya, who wrote in a different mode after Independence, particularly from the fifties onwards. Subsequently this linked him with the new poetry that emerged from the mid-fifties. But a considerable portion of the poetry he wrote in the thirties and forties and which has been collected in *Pātheya* (For the Road, 1931), *Abhijān* (The Expedition, 1938), *Palliśrī* (Rural Graces, 1941), *Bāji Rāut* (1941), *Pāṇḍulipi* (The Manuscript, 1947), *Abhigyān* (The Signet, 1948) and *Bhānumatīr Deśa* (The Land of Bhanumati, 1949), is predominantly romantic in tone and structure. Yet even in some of his early poetry a powerful 'progressive' note may be seen and in such poems like *Śramika Kabi* (The Labourer-Poet), *Sarbaharā* (The Proletariat, 1937), *Spen* (Spain), *Bipḷabar Janmadine* (On the Birthday of Revolution, 1939), *Nāl November* (The Red November, 1939), *Parabhātpherīra Gān* (The Song of the Morning) and *Berlin* (1945), his Marxist ideals cannot be missed. The following from *Bipḷabar Janmadine* is a representative piece:

Bring your Red Army,
Fly your blood banner,

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Whet your weapons in the skeleton of exploitation,
And you farmers, labourers, coolies
Make your arms strong,
And let the red flag fly proudly. (tr.)

The best known of these poems is *Bāji Raut*, a long poem written around 1938 to celebrate the heroism of a young boatman-boy from Dhenkanal, an ex-state, who chose to sacrifice his life defying the British authorities during the ex-states' revolt for freedom in the thirties.

Of the two important members of the second stream, Lakshmikanta Mahapatra, a fine lyricist and parodist, wrote on non-cooperation, salt march, elections, cabinet-formation and on individual political leaders. Sometimes humorously but more often with irony and satire he wrote to improve socio-political conditions. These poems are mainly found in the volume entitled *Rasa Sāhitya* (Humorous Literature, 1964). A poem entitled 'Mantrībaraṇī' (Welcoming Ministers) is a particularly good example of his style where the judges having failed to make a choice from among eligible candidates for ministership finally chose themselves as ministers.

The other poet, Godabarish Mahapatra, was personally involved in the Freedom Movement. He also devoted a number of years to journalism. His most important occupation was his able editorship of *Niāmkhuṇṭā* (The Stick of Fire), a socio-political weekly of courageous dissent (1938–65), wherein he published all his poems and prose pieces which in fact established him as the greatest satirical poet of contemporary Orissa. His poems were subsequently collected in *He Mora Kalama* (Oh My Pen, 1951), *Haṇḍīsāḷar Bipḷab* (The Revolution in the Kitchen, 1952), *Kaṇṭā O Phula* (The Thorn and the Flower, 1958) and *Baṅkā O Sidhā* (The Crooked and the Straight, 1964). Godabarish's poetry showed a wide range of human sympathy that was finely blended with breadth of thought and understanding. His language and style of writing were essentially colloquial and idiomatic but his poetry provided a strong and viable shape to the socio-political awareness in Oriya literature. Thus in the poem 'Pecā' (Owl), from *Kaṇṭā O Phula*, the owl is initially a symbol of socio-political corruption, which is raised finally to a symbolic level of darkness and satanic monstrosity:

The people worship owls
and they are everywhere,
And in darkness
preparations continue everywhere...
The conquest in darkness,
Your teeth and nails,
Your hypnotic gaze,
And the monstrous game in darkness
as money is sucked in from the treasury. (tr.)

The Post-Independence Era

The post-Independence era, beginning from the early fifties, revealed that tastes were changing. There was a restlessness in the air and a feeling grew that the poetry of Radhanath, Nilakantha, Mansinha and Ananta Pattanayak was not adequate to meet the needs of modern times. The attention was shifted to man's condition in a hostile, uncomprehending world, to a lonely, alienated self, to an existence which held no promise of hope for him. The poet who first gave powerful voice to this new poetic movement in Oriya in the fifties was Guruprasād Mohānty (b. 1924). But before Guruprasad, Sachidananda Rautraya had pioneered the new mode in the thirties and forties even while writing as a romantic, progressive poet. Thus even in poems that echo romantic imagination and which could possibly get sentimental, a synthesis of experiences in poetic structure, through wit and irony, may be noted. A good example was the poem *Smṛutilekhā* (Memory) where the memories of Australia's Melbourne and Calcutta's Chowringhee are mixed up with the pictures of Kalidas' Dasarna and the poet's love for his lady, projecting a rich fruitful experience.

I remember
Far away
In the dense shades of ripe black-berries
My Dasarna
The Village
My Melbourne
My dearest city. (tr.)

Rautraya's *Pāṇḍulipī*, which contained a large number of 'progressive' poems written in the romantic mode, also contained some otherwise significant poems such as 'Jyāmiti' (Geometry, 1945), 'Pratimā Nāyak' and 'Mṛtabandar' (The Dead Port), etc. The significance of these poems lie in their approach to life as well as in their analysis of existence. His subsequent volumes, *Svagat* (Soliloquy, 1958), *Kabitā 1962* (Poetry 1962), *Kabitā 1969* (1969), *Kabitā 1971* (1972) and *Kabitā 1974* (1975), while continuing to reveal the poet's earlier preoccupations with the romantic mode and 'progressive' ideas, also contain a number of poems which show a newness in taste and understanding. An example is the 'Hairpin' (from *Kabitā 1971*) which begins with a search for the lost hair-pin everywhere in the house:

I could not find it.
Where is it?
Where is your hair-pin? (tr.)

Slowly the search extends to other areas—distant hotels, river-banks, sea-beaches as well as to the 'layers of darkness', the 'intensity of moon-shine' and, finally, to the 'climbing

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steps of time',—far and near in the remote past and distant future. Ultimately the 'hairpin' becomes the symbol of youthful life ('Your tresses, beautiful and compact,/And the domes of your breast') the loss of which leads to a shocking vision of nakedness, emptiness and death. At the same time, the poet's sensitiveness to a spoken rhythm as well as his capacity to use the colloquial idiom brought a powerful linguistic structure to the emerging new Oriya poetry.

Guruprasad Mohanty. Guruprasad, the first important new poet, wrote mainly in the fifties. His collected poems appeared in 1970 under the title *Samudrasnān* (Sea Bathing). Guruprasad was a student and teacher of English literature and the influences on his poetry can be traced to English metaphysical poets including Donne and French Symbolists like Baudelaire, and the British poetry of the thirties and forties, particularly that of T. S. Eliot. He wrote very sparingly, but his poems shocked and provoked the reading public as few poems had done before. His control over idiomatic-conversational language as well as his capacity to manipulate its suppleness and flexibility was remarkable. Even before the poem's meaning is understood its poetic force overpowers the reader. Added to this are his ironical tone, sceptical attitude and expanse and subtlety of poetic meaning. Structurally speaking, his poems are the intimate soliloquies of his protagonist, a soul in agony—unfixed, unstable and alienated from an uncomprehending world—a victim of time's passage and the futility of existence. *Kāḷapuruṣa* (The Hunter, 1960), a poem in 375 lines, is a good illustration of his powers. It is divided into five sections, which are like corridors branching out from one central point, but instead of moving away they move into each other to finally return to the same central point from which they had started. This central point is a perception of death or, more precisely, death-in-life,—the modern hell where values do not exist, where the individual identity is lost and where the protagonist goes through a dry, sterile suffering with no hope of purgation. *Kāḷapuruṣa*, though a long poem, is not a narrative poem in the traditional sense. Instead of elaborating on a subject or a story or even a theme, it gives the reader areas of perception. While cutting through the logicalities of a narrative structure, it explores the multiple moods of the protagonist who lives through the modern futility of existence. The following example taken from the fifth section of *Kāḷapuruṣa* shows the poem's prevailing mood of uncertainty and anxiety.

Silent sands
Sands and sands
Gray grass and sands
Gray earth without end
Pale sun and gray sky
No roads
Gray sands and gray grass
Thirst and thirst without end
Pale, gray, silent
Sands and sands and sky
If consciousness returns
Pale consciousness
The thirst of crickets
The consciousness of wind
At the roots of wood-termites
Or in dead trees
If consciousness returns
In bones, flesh, skin
The consciousness of thorny grass
If consciousness returns
Sand and sand and grass
The beds of grass
Small ripples
Streams of small fishes
The stream
Grass and clouds
Clouds and peacocks
Not the hunger of crickets
Not the thirst of helpless sands. (tr.)

Bhanuji Rao (Bhānujī Rāo, b. 1926), a powerful new poet, was Guruprasad's companion in *Nūtan Kabitā* (New Poetry) where their poems were first jointly published in 1955. His first independent volume was *Biṣād eka Ṛtu* (Despair, a Season, 1973). This volume contains 85 poems, almost all of them written by Rao in the fifties and sixties. In contrast to Guruprasad's sweeping emotional force, Bhanuji's poems are restrained in tone and have been done with such careful attention to form that they are almost like chiselled pieces, Bhanuji did not write long poems. But his short ones provide multiple variations of the central theme of instability and loss of fixity. As if to compensate for Guruprasad's strong poetic force, Bhanuji developed a deep sensitiveness to the beauties of nature. But this was only superficial, because his references to nature essentially contribute to his inner perception of overpowering disunity and disintegration. Even his continuing references to love. or his attempts to evolve a meaning through multiple images, which are to be found in almost every poem, are expressive of a poetic desire to come across some sustaining strength. Thus in his poem *Hemanta* (Autumn) the experience ranges from the beautiful to the ugly and from feelings of life to feelings of death:

Autumn has come,
To the forest of mango, saal and jack fruit,
It has come stealthily, sneaking its way
Like a cat-burglar,
Into the night of green leaves.
Lo, the autumn sleeps
Like a dead sparrow covered

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With yellow paleness,
Its flesh all strewn
Pellmell over the grass. (tr. by the poet)

Together with Guruprasad, Bhanuji has been responsible for creating a positive taste for new poetry and inspiring comparatively younger poets, the best of whom are Ramakanta Rath (Ramākānta Rath, b. 1934) and Sitakant Mahapatra (Sītākānta Mahāpātra, b. 1937).

Ramakanta Rath. Ramakanta's first collection *Ketedinara* (Far-off Days, 1962), was full of echoes and imitations as well as soft, romantic emotions and rhetorical statements in a reflective-meditative mood. Yet the book as a whole showed a lot of promise. First, there was its conversational language in a poetic structure which responded sensitively to intensity of feelings whenever the occasion arose. Secondly, there was the poetic motivation which was worked out complexly, in multiple levels, incorporating both irony and ambiguity. Such a poem is *Laṇṭhaṇ* (The Lantern) in which intensity of emotion rises to an impersonality of experience. The poem begins normally with a reference to an ordinary lantern,

Kerosene, some smoke, a flame, and some insects
All unified in a metal container (tr.)

and grows rapidly to present a picture of a sea of fire raging with 'the movement of waves in a fearsome dark night'. Finally it is equalled with the protagonist's own being in which the fire burns completely tamed and disciplined:

Could you see my existence aflame?
Could you imagine how I burn and burn earnestly
In a medium dhoti and half shirt trimly ironed? (tr.)

The ironic conclusion brings out forcefully man's futile and helpless existence.

These aspects are more clearly seen in Ramakanta's next collection *Aneka Koṭhari* (Many Rooms, 1967), where the dominant poetic perceptions relate to loneliness, dryness, sterility and death. For example, the theme of *Bāghaśikār* (The Tiger Hunt, 1963) the longest and one of the most complex poems in the collection, relates to the protagonist's suffering and his futile desire to renew himself in a situation of new power and new strength.

If I have brought all
The shiverings in the moonlight in the forest,
If I have suffered all
The anxiety of the rider as he vanishes in the sky
with a trembling knee,
If I am that drummer
Whose sounds set innumerable shadows to dance in the
dancing-hall,
The smallness of sorrow or the immensity of complacency.
Then why should I raise the sounds
Which are half, and worry the shadows?
I therefore put on stripes, bright and red,
And put on flowers on my leafless branches,
white and colourless. (tr.)

In his subsequent collections, *Samdigdha Mṛgayā* (The Doubtful Hunt, 1971) and *Saptama Ṛtu* (The Seventh Season, 1977), Ramakanta's main poetic preoccupations continue, only the rhetoric which dominated his earlier poems, particularly those in his first volume, has been, by and large, eliminated here. The result is an easier and freer poetic movement. The first poem in *Samdigdha Mṛgayā*, entitled 'Paban' (The Wind) which is initially about a wind that blew the night before, in fact deals with ageing and death in the context of time.

The wind blew yesterday monstrously
And throughout the night
I could not have a wink of sleep,
And again and again
The window panes banged in the wind,
Slowly I grew up
My hands and legs lengthened
My neck became thick-set
And the width of my chest widened
And my doors and windowpanes banged in the air,
And my long hands and legs,
Thick neck and wide chest
Suddenly, in a moment, ceased to exist,
In the flaming fire
Half of my face is burnt
And the other half merges into darkness. (tr.)

'Ṣāguṇā' (Vulture) from *Saptama Ṛtu* is yet another good example which shows the protagonist's awareness of futility and darkness.

Suddenly the crowd of foxes and dogs
And loneliness in fields, courtyards, schools and shops
And the strange moaning voices from horizon to horizon. (tr.)

It may be said that Ramakanta's is a deeply troubled voice in modern Oriya poetry, troubled because of his intense awareness of futility. At the same time it is an indrawn voice, contemplative and analytical by nature, and to that extent responsible for a remarkable objectivity.

Sitakant Mahapatra. In Sitakant Mahapatra's poetry, on the other hand, though there is a similar intense preoccupation with death, agony and futility, the poetic-understanding moves to newer dimensions and finally triumphs over

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death. His collections include *Dīpti O Dwiti* (The Shine and the Glow, 1963), *Aṣṭapadi* (Eight Steps, 1967) *Śabdar Ākāś* (The Sky of Words, 1971), *Samudra* (The Sea, 1977) and *Citranadi* (The Pictorial River, 1979).

The poems in *Dīpti O Dwiti*, in spite of their simple structure, show a degree of sophistication and richness that one does not usually come across in a first volume. For example, 'Jarā Śabarar Saṅgīta' (The Song of Jara, the Hunter), which is structured on a mythological situation in the form of a soliloquy by Jara after he kills Krishna, is in fact modern man's predicament in a situation he cannot comprehend. Similarly, 'Basara Darpaṇare Suryāsta' (Sunset in the Mirror of a Bus), makes use of a mythical situation, that is, the revealing of Universal Vision to Arjuna. But this vision is finally merged with a common experience such as looking at the reflection of a sunset in the mirror of a moving bus which suddenly attains an awe-inspiring cosmic significance.

The cyclists and the pedestrians
All the mile posts
trees, plants, flowers, fruits
All are rushing to be lost
in that burning flaming existence....
Lost, all lost
Innumerable universes are gone, lost,
The Primitive Body sucks them all
All are absorbed in the last rays of the Great Sun,
The flaming globe in the mirror of the bus
(Is it heaven or beyond heaven?).... (tr.)

In the more relevant poems of *Dīpti O Dwiti*, three aspects may be noted. First, a picture of familiar, realistic life, which fills in the details of the structure. Secondly, references to mythological situations, which provide a broad perspective in the poems. And, finally, as the creative imagination co-ordinates these two aspects, it evolves a desire to get strength or to come to an understanding with the vital source of life. These aspects become clearer and more insistent in the poems included in *Aṣṭapadi*. The eight long poems in this collection are organised in the manner of an extended metaphor. Their situations are derived from mythology, but their perceptions extend to the present time.

In subsequent poems too, Sitakant continues to integrate myth—or, at least, the universality of meaning which a myth provides—with highly individual poetic vision. At the same time, his poetry develops towards a deeper understanding of life's complexity and richness. In the title poem of *Śabdar Ākāś*, the crude noises of life are heard together with a fine, subtle tune generated by the movement of creative words:

Day and night I hear the song of the blue sky....
....The sky in words
The sky of blue words
The words blue, grey, pink, red
.... Beaming, glittering (tr.)

and the final perception is one of illumination—'wordless', 'echoless', 'shapeless' and 'colourless'.

The sea provides the motivating force in the poems of *Samudra*. From one point of view, these poems deal with isolation, suffering and agony, where the traditional sources of life fail and where the sea symbolizes destruction. But viewed differently, the sea is also the primary source of life, the repository of all knowledge and grace and it generates cycles of fertility and fruitfulness. Thus, for example, in the poem, 'Saharare Samudra' (The Sea in the City) the reader feels the physical force of a sudden illumination in the midst of 'barrenness' and 'darkness'.

Then the sea was announced
in unfamiliar syllables of quiet whisper
in the crowded roaring city-centre....
Then in the limelight
the tall dark waves made meaning
of the sharp claws of imprecise verbs
tearing at layers of barrenness.... (tr.)

Citranadi continues the intensity and sharpness of *Samudra*, but the archetypal universality of the sea has been replaced by a contemplation of life in general. A good example is 'Jhada' (storm), which on the one hand relates to death and destruction, to a force like a monstrous whirlwind that rages and ravages—'uprooting', 'searing', 'pounding', 'exploding innumerable volcanos, pouring streams of hot tar'; and at the same time, it takes another direction and moves on to a deeper awareness of life—the continuity of life as well as the blossoming of a new life, even after destruction

The mornings will be full of birds' songs
.... and tiny flowers will peep from among the branches.
(tr.)

The physical devastation left by the storm is transferred to a mental emptiness and reversely, the hope of a new life is communicated by a sense of richness and fertility ('rainbows, clouds and sun' and 'birds flying in formation in the distant blue').

Guruprasad, Bhanuji, Ramakanta and Sitakant constitute the first major group of new poets and provide the most substantial contribution to new poetry. But the flowering of this poetry has been continuing and whereas Guruprasad and Bhanuji first wrote in the fifties, and Ramakanta and Sitakanta in the sixties, there are other powerful poets who have made their mark in the seventies. Pre-eminent among them are Saubhāgya Kumār Miśra

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(b. 1940) and Jagannāth Prasād Dās (b. 1936). Saubhagya's collections are *Ātmanepadī* (Interior Talks, 1965), *Madhyapadalopi* (Missing the Middle Word, 1970), *Naipahamrā* (Swimming a River, 1973) and *Andha Mahumāchi* (Blind Bees, 1977). He is generally concerned with the individual's despair and loneliness as well as with the sickening compulsions of living a purposeless life governed by routine. A good example is his poem *Andha Mahumāchi*. At one level, the blindness of the bee is symbolic. It relates to the denial of vision to the protagonist who blindly gropes through existence in a state of helpless melancholy only to fall a victim, at the end, to blind time, a time which never makes distinctions and moves on inexorably:

And I am to understand that
We will all have to sleep after some time,
And the smooth time like a snake
will glide over our feet,
And the buds will open into flowers
near our hands. (tr.)

But the bee's activity is also symbolic. Even though blind, it flies in search of honey which is sweet and nourishing. In a way it is a compulsion, a part of the bee's nature, and, symbolically, the honey is to be found everywhere (not in flowers alone), but from A to Z. Thus, at a deeper level, the protagonist's suffering is not the end. It is only a part of a more complex awareness wherein, grace, sweetness and light exist simultaneously.

Jagannātha's collections are *Prathama Puruṣa* (First Person, 1971), *Anyasabu Mṛtu O Anyānya Kabitā* (The Other Deaths and Other Poems, 1976) and *Je Jāhār Nirjanatā* (Everybody to His Loneliness, 1979). He is intensely aware of loneliness, instability and death; he also possesses a nourishing, meditative insight. His poems have generally been written in the context of love, but his poetic directions move towards a compact emotional sophistication. 'Sandhyā ṭhik Chaṭā' (Sharp at Six in the Evening) is a good example of this. In this love poem, the protagonist has an appointment with his lady-friend to meet her at Six in the evening:

You said we would meet at six
Sharp at six in the evening
We two
Outside the town. (tr.)

But the appointment becomes the releasing point for other feelings—uncertainty for the protagonist,

From morning to evening, from evening to morning
My sleep has no dreams, no memory, no desire, no hopes, (tr.)

restlessness for the woman

Would you search for me excitedly
In your bed, saree, tressess,
Restlessly
Putting hand on your breast, (tr.)

and, finally, a sense of total annihilation for both

it is the last day of life
This evening
And the world ends in a final conflagration. (tr.)

Thus, the initial anxiety for keeping an appointment at a lonely place ends in a situation when they meet at a crowded place:

It's immensely crowded outside the town
All the clocks of the noon have stopped
Only you and I, and evening sharp at Six
And the strange people of the city. (tr.)

Thus at a different level, the 'appointment' seems to have sinister implications, as if it is an appointment with death. The poet's understanding and apprehension of life's agony is resolved through a metaphysical insight into the complexities of existence.

The Seventies. The seventies have, indeed, seen a fine flowering of new poetry. Some of these poets and their collections are: Saurindra Bārik (*Sāmānya Kathan*, First Definition, 1975), Dīpak Miśra (*Saptama Pṛthibi*, The Seventh World, 1977 and *Araṇā Maimsi*, The Wild Buffalo, 1979), Śarat Kumār Pradhān (*Nadi O Mācha Haṅsa O Śārasa*, The River and Fishes, Swans and Seagulls, 1973), Harihar Miśra (*Akhyama Debatā*, Incapable God, 1978), Bibek Jenā (*Pabanar Ghara*, The House of Wind, 1971), Rājendra Kiśor Pandā (*Gauṇ Debatā*, The Minor God, 1977 and *Anabatāra*, No Incarnation, 1976), Pratibhā Satpathy (*Grasta Samaya*, Affected Time, 1974 and *Sāhādā Sundari*, 1978), Nityānanda Nāyak (*Bidirṇa Marāḷa*, The Torn Swan, 1976), Bańśidhar Sadaṅgi (*Samaya Asamaya*, Time and Without Time, 1977), Haraprasād Dās (*Ālokita Banabās*, The Illuminated Banishment, 1978), Surendra Mohanty (*Aśabda Śabda*, The Wordless Word, 1976), Praharaj Satyanārāyan Nanda (*Śabasaṅgam O Anyānya Kabitā*, The Copulation with Corpse and Other Poems, 1976), Nṛsimha Rath, Debadās Chotrāya, Pramod Mohānty, Phani Mohanty, Amarendra Paṭṭanāyak, Brahmotri Mohanty and Trilocana Bhoi. An intense consciousness of the realities of life on the one hand and a desire to comprehend this consciousness with a greater awareness of existence on the other, are to be found in the works of these poets.

At the same time, it should be noted that the importance

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poetic traditions of the twenties, thirties and forties still continue today. That is, the traditions of romantic poetry as well as of 'progressive' poetry still contribute to the total mosaic of post-Independence Oriya poetry. Thus, Binod Nāyak (b. 1919), Jānakiballab Mohānty (b. 1925), Beṇudhar Rāut (b. 1926) and Cintāmoṇi Beherā (b. 1928) still write in the tradition of romantic poetry and Rabi Singh (b. 1932) Brajanath Rath (b. 1936) and Prasanna Kumar Patsani (b. 1947) write left-oriented 'progressive' poems. The romantic poets, on the whole, write with subdued poetic-voice about beauty and grace, in the manner of Baikunthanath and Mansinha. But a poet with a strident and striking voice is Rabi Singh, the most important exponent today of Oriya 'progressive' poetry. Some of his important collections are *Carampatra* (Ultimatum, 1961), *Pathaprānter Kabitā* (The Poems of the Street, 1959), *Śithiḷa Balgā* (Loose Reins, 1962, *Lālpāgodār Preta* (The Ghost of Red Pagoda, 1963), *Bhrukuṭi* (The Frown, 1963), *Bidīrṇa* (The Torn, 1964), *Padāṭika* (The Foot, 1965), *Aprītikar Kabitā* (Unpleasant Poems, 1966), *Jvālāra Māḷā* (The Garland of Agony, 1967), *Durgama Giri* (Impassable Hill, 1971), *Jhada* (Storm, 1973), and *Sarbaharā* (Proletariat, 1974). A typical poem of Rabi Singh's is *Jvālāra Māḷā* wherein he addresses his lady-love with anger:

My love is broken
Everything is unpleasant
Along with me your life is now full of poison,
My garden has no flowers
Everything is burnt,
There is only nakedness
Bitter life
And absolute emptiness. (tr.)

There is rhetoric in Rabi Singh's poetry, but there is also power.

Modern Oriya poetry, particularly after Independence, has shown both resilience and strength and has developed an intense insight into the fundamentals of existence. Today it represents perhaps the essence of Oriya creative talent at its perceptive best.

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Punjabi

SATINDER SINGH

The Qissa Tradition

Punjabi literature has a vital poetic tradition of its own. Punjabi folk literature, especially folk-songs, is a vital component of this tradition. Religious verse represents another distinctive strand. This poetry of the Sikh Gurus and the Indian saints is characterized by deep mystic ardour, rich natural imagery and verbal felicity. It is a religio-cultural poetry having a philosophical and ethical base. Punjabi Sufi poets composed their verses to express their passionate love for God in an intimately personal idiom. Punjabi *qissā* poetry expresses tales of love in verse and is composed in various popular metres.

Punjabi poetry in the 19th century was centred on these religious and romantic themes. During the first half of the century, a number of major poets, such as Hasham Shah (Haṣam Ṣa, 1753–1821), Ahmad Yar (Ahmad Yār, 1768–1845), Imam Bakhsh (Imam Bakhṣ, 1778–1863), Shah Muhamad (Ṣa Mohamad, 1789–1862), Kadar Yaar (Kadr Yār, 1802–92) and Maulvi Gulam Rasool (Maulvi Gulam Rasūl, 1814–76), wrote popular *qissā* poetry. This tradition continued even in the latter half of the century. During

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the Sikh rule in the 19th century there was no appreciable development of Punjabi literature. The official language was Persian and Punjabi did not enjoy any special privilege. The Punjabi language was not even taught in the schools. Foreign languages such as Urdu, Persian and English were commonly used by the educated and the intellectuals in the Punjab.

Western Impact

After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, there was chaos in the Punjab. With no able commander to lead it, the powerful Sikh army, though it fought valiantly, was inevitably, defeated by the British, who thus annexed the Punjab in 1849. When the uprising of 1857 was put down, the British rule became firmly established in the state. The British started schools and colleges. They set up an Education Department in 1860 and founded Oriental College in Lahore in 1864. Western thought came to the Punjab and there now developed a new kind of awareness. Though Urdu, Persian and English were dominant, their development by implication had a healthy impact on Punjabi. For example, the growth and success of Urdu *muṣairas* helped the tradition of *kavi-darbārs* (stage poetry) in Punjabi.

In the early years of the British rule, many Punjabi poets continued to write popular romantic poetry using traditional metaphors and metres. Many wrote *qissās* on Hir-Ranjha, Sassi-Punnu, Sohni-Mahiwal, Mirza-Sahiban, etc. but they did not create any greater impact than their predecessors. Some signs of innovation, however, were visible in the experimental use of new metre, metaphors and rhetoric and, sometimes, there was a conscious effort to ensure the formal aspects of poetry. Old metres such as 'Baint' and 'Dwayya' were abandoned by some poets. Short poems, such as 'siharfi', 'baramah' and 'ghazal', on the pattern of Urdu poetry, were composed by others. These forms enhanced the beauty of poetry, but did not provide anything new by way of subject matter or sensibility. Some of the major poets of this period are Kishan Singh Arif (Kiṣan Siṅg Arif, 1839-1900), Fazal Shah (Fazal Ṣa, 1827-90), Muhammad Bakhsh (Mohammad Bakhṣ, 1829-1909), Bhagwan Singh (Pagvān Siṅg, 1842-1902), Muhammad Boota Gujrati (Mohamad Būṭa Gujrati, 1851-1930), and Maula Bakhsh Kushta (Maula Bakhṣ Kuṣta, 1876-1955). Fazal Shah's *qissā* on Sohni-Mahiwal and Bhagwan Singh's *qissā* on Hir were greatly acclaimed, but this was poetry which could not dissociate from tradition. Kishan Singh Arif adopted the romantic style for his religious and moral preachings. Besides these creative efforts, Shah Mohamad of an earlier generation, wrote an account of the wars fought between the English and the Sikh armies. This work was in the tradition of Punjabi heroic poetry, which dealt with the heroic deeds and valiant qualities of the people of the Punjab.

A significant change came about towards the end of the 19th century. The obsession with religious and mythological thinking receded with the introduction of western intellectualism and scientific realism. This type of renaissance brought about a considerable transformation in literary activities. Old literary themes and fashions were given up in favour of new ones under the influence of English education and literature.

Punjabi verse forms also underwent a significant change. The poets started using short poetic forms; the personal moods of the poets became coloured with a new artistic vigour. Poets began to enjoy a new freedom from the rigid use of metre that had prevailed under the classical scheme of versification. New patterns of expression, new metres, new images and new themes were introduced. The English romantic poets Wordsworth and Coleridge were a major influence on Punjabi poets, who touched upon their themes with a new awareness. Punjabi poetry gradually began to pull itself out of its retrogression.

Bhai Vir Singh's Influence. At this stage of literary change, Bhai Vir Singh (Pai Vīr Siṅg, 1872-1957) appeared on the Punjabi scene. His religious epics, lyrics and nature-poetry all show signs of western influence. But Mulk Raj Anand calls Vir Singh, the 'colossus of modern Punjabi literature', the man who built 'the monuments of erudition, religious interpretation, fiction and verse'. Bhai Vir Singh dominated Punjabi literature for about half a century. He was instrumental in clearing the ground for the new Punjabi poetry. Though essentially religious in content, his poetry bridged the gulf between the old and the new. He introduced in his poems, themes altogether different from the known models of the past. According to Dr S. Radhakrishnan, 'Bhai Vir Singh is one of those representative Indians deriving inspiration from the classical wisdom of our land and living it before our eyes.'

Vir Singh worked for the Singh Sabha movement of religious revivalism to counteract the activities of the Christian missionaries. He worked for the propagation of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus and to restore Sikhism to its pristine glory. The influence of *Gurbāṇi* runs through almost all his verses, in which he has preserved the tradition of Sikh mystic poetry. The poetry of Bhai Vir Singh is the expression of timeless reality through the depiction of nature. He proclaims that his Divine Master is the source of his poetic inspiration:

> Wondrous is Thy art, my Master!
> Eternal is your song.
> You are the song, the music and the thrill,
> You the joy, you the enjoyer, you the joyed!
> (tr. from *Ras Rasia Rab*)

He is the precursor of renaissance in Punjabi literature and was responsible for reforming the superstitious innova-

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folk. There is an artistic blending of the spiritual with the real in his poetry.

You met me in my dream
I dashed and embraced you
But Alas! You were all brightness
I could not lay hold of
And my wrist kept trembling
(tr. from *Kambdī Kalāi*)

Vir Singh introduced the short lyric form through his lyrics which were of a personal nature. In *Lehran De Har*, (Garland of Waves) and *Matak Hulare* (Delightful Swings), his lyrics depict various moods and pleasures derived from nature. He displays an intense intimacy with the spirit pervading the Universe. There is a colourful pantheism running through his poems. Spring-water is cool and pleasant when it lives in God. Kashmir is beautiful as it is near the touch of God, Dal Lake is a piece of God's grandeur; Anant-Nag recalls *Anant* (The Infinite). To him, Nature is a healing nurse and a consoling mother:

The heart sorrows when parting from loved ones,
But parting from you, Kashmir, I sorrow not.
(tr. from *Kaśmir ton Vidaige*)

Puran Singh (Pūran Siṅg, 1881–1931) was a poet of original and unique qualities, who deviated from the conventional style of poetic writing. He can neither be enjoyed nor judged by the standards of the past. Discussing his poetry, Harbhajan Singh says that 'he is the first Punjabi poet who did not completely accept the tradition of Punjabi Literature'. He was the first to proclaim that rhythm and metre are neither normative nor necessary conditions for poetry. He compared the bindings of metre with feudal slavery.

Puran Singh has deviated so much from the traditional poetic style that, sometimes, a reader finds no difference between his poetry and prose. The liberties he has taken with metre in his poetry, however, serve a specific poetic purpose, he has discarded metre to make his poetic style more natural and spontaneous. He was an ardent and inspired bard of the Punjab, who sang of the beauty and romance of the land of Five Rivers. Well acquainted with western poetic styles and the writings of Walt Whitman, he succeeded in introducing 'vers libre' into Punjabi poetry. His collections *Khullhe Khuṇḍ* (Open Veils), *Khullhe Maidān* (Open Fields) are unique. Though a scientist himself he expresses a specific reaction against the analytical attitude of scientific thinking that finds no difference between the inner emotional world and the external material world. That is why he has been called a poet of primitive sensibility.

Kirpa Sagar (Kiṛpa Sāgar, 1875–1939) is famous for his long epic poem *Lakṣmī Devī* (1915), which was based on Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake*. This poem gave an impetus to Punjabi poetry by demonstrating how western poetic forms could be adapted. Diwan Singh Kalepani (Divan Siṅg Kalepani, 1894–1944) made satirical attacks on society and the established dogmas of life in *Vagde Pāṇī* (The Flowing Waters) and *Antim Laihrān* (The Last Waves). Mohan Singh Diwana (b. 1899) is yet another poet who departed from the traditional verse. In *Dhūp Chān* (Sun and Shade) he expresses some new and personal experiences of life, while in *Mastī* (Ecstasy) he blends secular, devotional and mystic poetry with Vedanta and Sufi ideas.

Nationalistic Poetry

The new social and political awareness of the 20th century gave rise to ideas of freedom and democracy. The consequence of nationalism was that people worked unitedly to set aside differences of caste, creed and religion. Gurmukh Singh Musafir (Gurmukh Siṅg Musāphīr, 1899–1976) and Hira Singh Dard (Hīrā Siṅg Dard, 1889–1964) were the leading poets who gave expression to this type of thinking. Others who promoted these ideals were Puran Singh and Dhani Ram Chatrik (Dhani Rām Cātrik, 1876–1954). Punjabi poetry, at this stage, became a vehicle for the expression of patriotic feelings as well as such concepts as the equality of the sexes, love of the motherland and the mother tongue.

A number of national movements helped to bring about this awareness. The Namdhari movement under the leadership of Baba Ram Singh, though eventually unsuccessful, attempted to unite the people against the British rule by trying to create hatred for English goods. The partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon was another incident which incited the whole nation. The farmers of the Punjab organized themselves to agitate for honour and economic betterment. Banke Dyal's lyric *Pagri Sabhal Jatta* (O Peasant Protect Your Honour) addressed to the Punjabi farmers, became very popular as it expressed the feelings of the time impressively:

O peasant! Hold your Turban
You are looted, made miserable
Let us show our strength and
Save our honour. (tr.)

The Gadar party movement worked for the liberation of the country through revolutionary means. Its daily newspaper *Gadar*, published from America, contained literary writings aimed at inspiring and uniting the people. But like the uprising of 1857, this party also was demolished. The tragic incident involving the ship 'Koma Gata Maru', in which many Punjabis were brutally killed, shook the whole country. Punjabi poets wrote many poems about this tragedy. Hira Singh Dard's poetic work on *Baba Gurdit*

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Singh, the leader of this protest-delegation, narrates the whole story.

Punjabi poetry overflowed with patriotism after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Once again, under the influence of the Akali movement, which won the sympathy of the whole of India, many Punjabi poets expressed their feelings of nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi called the victory of the Akalis in the Morcha to get the keys of the temple, 'the first decisive victory of Swaraj'.

Harinder Singh Roop (Harinder Siṅg Rūp, 1907–54), Vidhata Singh Tir (Vidātā Siṅg Tir, 1901–75), Avatar Singh Azad (Avtār Siṅg Āzād, b. 1906), Firozedin Sharaf (Firozdin Ṣaraf, 1898–1955) and Dhani Ram Chatrik are some of the poets who made notable contributions in this field. Many stage poets, such as Darshan Singh Awara (Darśan Siṅg Āvārā, b. 1906), Barkat Ram Yuman (Barkat Rām Yuman, 1905–67), Teja Singh Sabar (Tejā Siṅg Sābar, b. 1907), Nand Lal Nurpuri (Nand Lāl Nūrpurī, 1906–66), Gurdit Singh Kundan, Ishar Singh Ishar and Chiragdin Daman, won laurels for their poems expressing love for the land and sympathy for its people. Some major literary poets like Bhai Vir Singh, Mohan Singh (Mohan Siṅg, 1905–78), Amrita Pritam (Amṛitā Pṛītam, b. 1919) and Harbhajan Singh (Harpajan Siṅg, b. 1920) also wrote patriotic poems.

The partition of the country in 1947 is yet another theme that finds recurrent expression in modern Punjabi poetry. Poets wrote of the tragic happenings in the Punjab with poignant tenderness and grief. Punjabi poets lamented over the inhuman acts of bloodshed and insanity. Amrita Pritam poured out the agony of her wounded soul in a long, elegiac poem addressed to Waris Shah, the author of the immortal Punjabi romance 'Hir-Ranjha' and considered an exemplary symbol of harmony and unity in the Punjabi past. In another poem by Amrita Pritam, *Majbur*, the illegitimate son of an abducted woman expresses his disgust and anguish thus:

I'm the scar of a wound;
The abuse that attaches to my mother's body;
The weight of inhumanity
That my mother involuntarily held up for months. (tr.)

Other poets too such as Mohan Singh, Santokh Singh Dhir (Santok Siṅg Dhīr, b. 1920) and Piara Singh Sahraee (Piārā Siṅg Sahraī, b. 1915), wrote a number of poems about this tragic partition, poems of deep human sorrow.

Romantic Poetry

Punjabi romantic poetry is essentially an expression of the experiences of middle-class individuals striving to transcend the old feudal frame of values. This poetry acquired its worldly, humanistic orientation through poets like Mohan Singh, Amrita Pritam, Prabhjot Kaur (Prabjot Kaur, b. 1924) and Shiv Kumar (Śiv Kumār, 1936–73).

Punjabi romantic poetry, full of imagination, is a supreme form of emotive language. In this poetry, it is difficult to separate the idea from the emotion. It lays stress on inspiration and intuition and is expressed in such language. This inspiration is of a transcendental nature with mystic qualities.

Punjabi romantic poets are conscious artists acutely aware of their poetic tradition. They refashioned the existing poetic models in order to make them apt media for the new consciousness of their age. They were more radical due to the growing western influence. In Punjabi romantic poetry the expression of the self became a dominant feature. It presented the feelings of the middle-class individual, and the poetic expression acquired a specific type of characteristic.

Mohan Singh, who presented secular feelings of love and romance in his poetry, was an advocate of free love. His thinking influenced most of his contemporary Punjabi poets. Mohan Singh is essentially a lyrical poet and his subjective lyrics in *Sāve Pattar* (Green Leaves, 1936) and *Kusumbhra* (Safflowers, 1939) are a unique contribution to Punjabi poetry. His romantic ballads express contemporary consciousness in a profound manner and engage the reader's mind. These ballads possess the felicity of folk ballads, but his symbolic patterns and metrical variations impart a distinctive mannerism to them.

Wearing,
Wearing sky-blue petticoats
*Jattis** shall dance *Giddha*
O Fellow beings, fellow beings
Ahead is worker's Dominion.
(*Women of the village)
(tr. from *Gajjan Siṅg*)

Amrita Pritam considers love a basic emotion in any person's life. She makes it a primary tool in her poetic writing. She captures in her love poetry the spirit, spontaneity and the rhythm of Punjabi folk poetry.

In the crystal mortar of Painful Separation
I grind the antimony of life
Every night the sky
Demands one spindle of it. (tr. from *Chan*)

Prabhjot Kaur expresses the feelings of sad separation and melancholy in love. She concludes that every love story has a tragic end. She seeks the fulfilment of love in a dream-world; when the dream is over, only sorrow and despair are left.

Shiv Kumar, a gifted Punjabi poet, occupies a unique

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place in Punjabi romantic poetry. He won acclaim with his very first collection *Piṛān Dā Prāgā* (Grist of Pain), which reveals his ability to write sweet but sad songs.

O Grain parcher
Take my tears as a price
to bake my Grist of pains
O Grain Parcher
I have my grist of sorrows to be baked.

(tr. from *Git*)

Punjabi romantic poets were neither ignorant of tradition nor were so overpowered by their emotions that they entirely rejected tradition. They experimented with the traditional modes of poetic expression, adapting them to modern needs. Punjabi romantic poetry is, thus, at once novel and traditional, echoing the past in themes and forms, but using them to new purpose, providing new emphases or new insights. The relationship between the poet and the landscape makes Punjabi romantic poems both, subjective and objective. The poet talks about himself by talking about an object, and he talks about an object by talking about himself.

Many poetic forms are used by the Punjabi romantic poets. Though in ballads they captured the spirit of folk ballads, they related this form of poetry to contemporary consciousness. In Mohan Singh's popular ballad *Gajjan Singh*, for example, the character tends to become larger than the incident and the ballad becomes a means of psychological character study.

The Ode suited the Punjabi romantic poets best. Their models were from the English, but these were enriched with indigenous characteristics such as simplicity and naivete. Many Punjabi poets wrote dramatic monologues in the romantic tradition of the lyric. The monologues in modern Punjabi poetry are also a development from the romantic dramatic lyric in which the poet speaks through the observer.

Punjabi romantic poetry, thus used old as well as modern poetic forms.

Progressive Poetry

The impact of social realism changed the pattern of Punjabi poetry. Individualistic romantic poetry was transformed into progressive social poetry. A major reason for the influence of progressive thought on romantic thinking was that even after Independence, contemporary society could not free itself from the shackles of old feudal values, and free and equal love could not be accepted. Secondly, the romantic movement imbibed in its spirit certain ideals from the revolutionary movement. Though under the influence of socialist ideology, romanticism was condemned and rejected, it cannot be denied that the romantics were the first to bring a major change in the age-old tradition of poetic writing. Punjabi romantic poetry is, thus, a bridge between the old and the new.

The growing faith in the importance of social values became the dominant characteristic of modern Punjabi literature. Punjabi writers, influenced by European thinking, began to feel the impact of the fast-changing political conditions. A new social awareness now coloured their outlook and vision. Punjabi poets too began to share this new interest in the contemporary environment.

Punjabi progressive poets tried to create an awareness of the human struggle against feudal values. Their poetry expresses the longings of a middle class seeking to break the shackles of the feudal set-up that bound the individuality of its members, and it attempts to better their condition. These Punjabi poets wrote to awaken the common man, the poor and the labourer.

Under the influence of socialist ideology it was maintained that only progressive literature would reflect the reality of life and uphold the cause of humanity and justice. The progressive writers also wrote poems on themes such as the tragic consequences of the Second World War and the Bengal famine.

With the advent of progressive Punjabi poetry, traditional themes and attitudes became obsolete. This new trend, the writer's involvement with his own times, finds its fulfilment in the poetry of Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam. Their work is characterized by a steadily growing intellectual consciousness, but it reveals at the same time an imaginative insight. Their poetry has a strong social purpose as well as the authenticity of genuine poetry. This poetry served an important purpose in inaugurating new modes and tastes. Enthusiasm for reform and concern with contemporary public affairs resulted in the enervation of true poetic imagination.

Mohan Singh's early love poetry is characterized by an exuberant romantic lyricism, but his later concept of love is greatly influenced by progressive ideas. Being more conscious of social-inequality, he longs to escape from an oppressive society. He expresses his discontent over the lame independence which benefits only a few capitalists:

Prosperity smiled over a few only
Miseries mock at more and more
Few faces are bright and happy
Others are ghastly, worse than before.

(tr. from *Sunde San*)

The vision of the poet is focused on the hungry masses and the depressed sections of society. He condemns complacent Sadhus, whose prayers do little to remove the misery of the masses. He cannot appreciate the grandeur of the Taj, when he remembers the thousands of destitute labourers who, besmeared with dust and dirt, had toiled

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to build it. He doubts 'whether this beauty, fed on the tears of millions, is beauty at all'. At this stage, Mohan Singh's personal love is transformed into his love for the masses. He tries to interpret his personal love and disappointment in terms of the larger perspective of human affairs and existence. In his later works, such as *Āwāzān* (The Calls) and *Vaḍā Velā* (High Time) he goes even further to affirm that the collective well-being of society is an essential condition for personal happiness.

Mohan Singh now becomes the supporter of socialist ideology. He considers the future of the earth to lie in the destruction of imperialistic capitalism and in the establishment of the rule of the proletariat. He urges the people to unite against the capitalists with hammers and sickles. He proclaims to his comrades that the darkness is over as the workers have found their path to salvation.

Amrita Pritam, on the other hand, describes the sufferings women undergo at the hands of men. The social set-up, she contends, has been built by men to suit them and so, women are suppressed. In works like *Pathor Gīṭe* (Stone Pebbles), *Lamīān Vāṭān* (Long Distances), she cries out against the social system which exploits women. She condemns the capitalist order, she desires that no one should exploit the female sex or rob the peasantry.

Amrita Pritam writes didactic verse emphasizing human virtues. Once she wrote on such themes as India's freedom movement and national unity; now she concentrates on such subtleties as the significance of social and economic forces in the life of the people. She has accepted, and propagates socialist ideas of equality, liberty and economic opportunity.

Mohan Singh and Amrita Pritam, however, have not been able to free themselves from the romantic sensibility. Therefore, the fundamental revolutionary nature of the progressive movement remains untouched in their writings. Progressive ideology, instead of reforming the existing set-up, stresses the need for revolutionary means to purge society of its evils. But instead of seeking changes in the system, Mohan Singh seeks to change the person: 'I will come in the changed times again'. Mohan Singh's and Amrita Pritam's poetry remains limited to the advocacy of such common socialist panaceas as the renunciation of the old values, a classless society, condemnation of capitalist policies, world peace, etc.

In Bawa Balwant's poetry, socialism acquires the role of a guiding principle. There is a call for active revolution in his poetry and a powerful suggestion of a new social order to suit the common man. He declares that socialism is a harbour-destination (*bandergah*), that each ship of life must reach. But with his mature expression, he also embraces a wider range of emotive nuances. Such works of his as *Mahān Nāch* (Great Dance), *Amar Gīt* (Immortal Song) and *Jawālā Mukhī* (Volcano) are based on religious, historical and mythological themes.

Bawa Balwant seeks to be one with the masses and speaks and writes for them alone. He denounces the capitalist order, wherein woman is ill-treated as the result of a perverted sense of morality. Bawa attaches great importance to international cooperation and universal equality; partiotism to him is a narrow-minded political creed and a hindrance to peace. He stakes that wars waged by patriotic nations merely ruin the masses, while only the rich enjoy the fruits of victory. Humanity is sacrificed at the fantastic altar of patriotism only for the benefit of a few rich. With broad vision, he considers the universe his garden and sings the song of liberty to cleanse the mind of all base prejudices.

Others who have written in the progressive strain are Pritam Singh Safeer (Prītam Siṅg Safīr, b. 1916), Santokh Singh Dhir, Avtar Singh Azad, Piara Singh Sahraee and Gurcharan Rampuri (Gurcaraṇ Rāmpuri, b. 1929). A refined intellectual tone, a concentrated thought-pattern and an evolved subjective idiom give a rich distinctive tone to Safeer's verse. His intellectual consciousness and individual philosophic outlook bestow upon him a more comprehensive and integrated vision. His poetry serves a definite social purpose; he foresees the inevitability of the change that will one day 'illumine the mud-huts'. He also strikes an occasional note of pungency in many poems. In his famous poem *Manū de Pairokār* (Followers of Manu), he says:

> The followers of Manu....
> Take charge of the souls
> of their sons and daughters
> They seek to find love
> In stone-idols
> They mock the love of Ranjha and Hir. (tr.)

S. S. Dhir's feelings spring from a more direct and practical experience. There is sarcasm and irony in his poems which deal with all-round maladjustments. Avtar Singh Azad brings to the heroic aspects of Sikh history a sense of the progressive. His epic poems effectively evoke stirring periods of the history of Punjab. Like Dhir, Piara Singh Sahraee is forthright in his denunciations. Gurcharan Rampuri advocates the cause of collective effort and strives to instil in his readers a sense of unity.

Punjabi progressive poetry dealt with wider human problems of life and society. It denounced world wars, famine, conditions and longed for the betterment of humanity. Progressive poetry condemned false values of life, the corrupt politics, and injustice and exploitation of the working classes.

Experimental Poetry

Poetry after the sixties showed the results of several fresh experiments. Writers of Punjabi progressive poetry, but

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in their enthusiasm to preach ideology come down to the level of the propagandist. The lack of finesse in their works and the mere proclamation of borrowed ideas had resulted in a degeneration of poetic values and a lowering of the standards of artistic expression. Hence an imperative need was felt by some poets for a new idiom and fresh artistic devices to suit the new awareness of the times. There were other poets who had no liking for the materialistic attitude of socialist ideology, yet longed for the betterment of humanity. Poets such as Narinderpal Singh (Narindarpāl Siṅg, b. 1923), Prabhjot Kaur, Jaswant Singh Neki, (b. 1925) and Harbhajan Singh wrote for the propagation of universal and humanistic ideals.

Due to a break in the historical alliance between middle-class individualism and the revolutionary forces, Punjabi poetry changed to *paryogśīl* (experimental) poetry, and the possibilities of collective experience was exhausted. Progressive poets could pay only a negligible attention to the artistic values of poetry. Poetry used as a tool for the preaching of certain ideas generally sank to pamphleteering. Moreover, the mechanical sensibility of progressive poetry could not adopt new values of life. The poet in general translated the public opinion while the creative qualities became insignificant.

In experimental poetry there is a search for new modes of expression and idiom to suit the new kind of experience. Experimental poetry, like progressive poetry, aimed at the expression of the reality of life. The experimentalists did not consider established values as the ultimate truths. They judged and evaluated things in the changed environment on the basis of scientific attitudes. They tried to establish new directions in place of traditional values as in the following:

O what is Left out in Life?
And what in the world?
Vitality not in Faith, Force not in thinking
Hanging in Void, neither standing nor moving
What an existence!
(tr. from *Chite Kale Dhabe* by Ravinder Ravi)

This new movement in the Punjabi poetry of the sixties was influenced by new European writing and by poets like Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. The major Punjabi poets of this movement are J. S. Ahluwalia (Jasbīr Siṅg Ahluwālia, b. 1935), Ravinder Ravi (Ravīndar Ravi, b. 1937), Ajaib Kamal (b. 1932), Sukhpalvir Singh Hasrat (Sukhpāl Vīr Siṅg Hasrat, b. 1936) and Tara Singh (Tāra Siṅg, b. 1929).

These poets tended to search for the unknown. The major part of their poetry deals with the subconscious mind and the stream of consciousness, neither of which could be expressed with the traditional devices of style and metre. Hence, in order to achieve faithful communication, they tried to evolve a suitable idiom and a style of free association.

Experimental poetry also expressed the aspirations of the middle class who lived under the unbearable burden of civilization and the ruling class. These poets not only rejected the existing reality but were bent on replacing rotten old values by new values. The individual reality and the general reality were taken to be components of a whole. In some of their poems, there were even traces of the old romanticism. But because of its emphasis on individualistic tendencies, this poetry became more or less the private language of personal friends and the movement could not become more influential. If progressive poetry was mainly extrovert, experimental poetry was introvert in character—and both became lopsided.

Experimental poetry revealed the inner layers of the individual subsconscious, to express which it had to find a suitable complex style. But on the other hand due to its increased emphasis on individualism and the self, it gradually lost touch with society. At this juncture there emerged the New Punjabi Poetry. This new poetry was personalized against the individualistic experimental poetry, which on the whole, dealt with the expression of the ego; this poetry tried to improve the human personality and was, hence, not purely subjective.

The New Poetry

The breakdown of the traditional frame of thinking has led to a crisis in life-values. This crisis of modern civilization is reflected faithfully in the new Punjabi poetry. The new experience could not be expressed through old means. Each experience brings with it its own symbols, terms of reference and means of expression. Several aspects of the new experience were all represented in the new poetry, viz. hope for a better future for mankind, search for a creative self, relationship with the surroundings and abstract ideas.

After the Second World War, corruption, bribery and injustice in capitalist countries has resulted in the annihilation of many human values. Feelings of alienation, strangeness and dejection have gripped the human mind. The new Punjabi poets present this helplessness of the individual in the wider perspective of outside reality.

In the machine culture of the modern age, Man considers himself a tiny creature (*Laghū Mānav*) surrounded by the dominance of huge machines. The new values of this age find expression in new Punjabi poetry. The main reason for the anti-ethical tone of this poetry is the very real burden of ethical taboos, contradictions and inner conflicts in the life around. New Punjabi poetry describes the changed surroundings and the new values, it satirizes the lack of authentic values of life and those who lead a stagnant and useless life.

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New Punjabi poetry has excited violent attacks and has also inspired indignant defense. Many of the new poems do look a bit outrageous at first, especially to orthodox readers. But to readers who know the history of poetic experience, there is in the new poetry nothing really new and nothing that needs to be condemned on theoretical grounds. To vilify new Punjabi poetry because it shows a growing indifference to rhyme, is to be partisan. New poets are in fact trying to restore vitality and reality to the technique of verse as they search for greater truths. They seek to evolve techniques which will make their verses sound spontaneous, making the diction and rhythm of their verse as close to what the common speech sounds like.

The new Punjabi poets attempt to represent every picture as it looks to the eye and every action as it is first gathered up in the memory. They derive their methods, unconsciously or consciously, from the masters of modern realism. They are influenced by the methods of fiction, the art of the short story and a knowledge of artistic realism. That is why the new generation of Punjabi poets is transferring the methods of prose realism to verse. One obvious result of this transfer is that the new Punjabi poetry is, curiously, unlike song. A second result is that all kinds of subjects are now written about in verse, as in fiction.

The language of new Punjabi poetry is uniquely ambiguous. It deviates from established norms. It detaches itself from the poetic tradition of Bhai Vir Singh by considerably avoiding interpretative passages that lengthen poems. The resultant ambiguity is not only because of the concise narration; it is also due to the use of private symbols, which is its major characteristic.

The contemporary poet is struggling against an invisible cultural fixation. He not only wants liberation from tradition but wishes to dissociate himself from its concepts as well. That is why he shuns the use of old signs and creates a new symbolic expression, which a sensitive reader must delve deep into to arrive at an understanding. That is why the tone of Punjabi poetry is challenging. Out of this growing awareness, Surjit Pattar, for instance, declares:

Know we now that
It was not Sahiba
But the times
That put quiver on the tree.
Know we now that
The Soul eats flesh
And fragrance has teeth.
(tr. from *Cauṅk Sahīdān Vic Usdā Ākhrī Pāsaṇ*)

New Punjabi poetry is not anti-social. Medieval poetry has its own values and commitments; progressive poetry had its base in Marxist-Leninist economic values, but the new poet, dissatisfied with both, searches for new social values. Earlier Punjabi poetry dealt with an established way of life; the new poetry deals with those problems and the complexities of life which do not have a settled nature. The new values of contemporary life keep changing fast and the new poetry tries to shed light on this mercurial state of affairs.

The new poets' dissatisfaction with prevalent conditions is not aimed at rejecting them, but is intended to reveal human weaknesses and shortcomings and to thus create a sense of courage to face them. The type of dissatisfaction and rejection expressed in new Punjabi poetry leads to external, historical consciousness. Several poets like Ahluwalia, Bhagwant Singh (Pagwant Siṅg, b. 1926), Tara Singh, S. S. Misha (Miṣa, b. 1933), Surjit Pattar (Surjit Patar, b. 1945), Amitoj (Amitoj, b. 1947), Ravinder Ravi, Ajaib Kamal, Harbhajan Singh, Pash (Paṣ, b. 1950), Dev (b. 1947), Waryam Asar (Variam Asar, b. 1937), Nirmal Arpan (Nirmal Arpaṇ, b. 1938), Parminderjit (Parmīnderjit, b. 1946), Mohanjit (Monjit, b. 1938), Harinam (Harinām), Sati Kumar (Sati Kumār), Amarjit Chandan (Amarjit Candan, b. 1946), Shaharyar (Ṣaharyar, b. 1949), Rajbir (Rajbīr) and Gurbhajan Gill bring out this wider human and historical consciousness in their writings.

New Punjabi poetry is much influenced by existentialist philosophy. Harbhajan Singh and J. S. Neki deal with various aspects of human existence. Their poetry expresses the need to define human existence in order to live and think better.

Neki's poetic intuition had a transcendental quality about it. His capacity to penetrate to the fundamentals of life is truly remarkable. His lucid style in *Eh Mere Sanse Eh Mere Gīt* (My Doubts, My Lyrics) and *Simratī De Kiran Iṅ Paihilān* (Before Memory Faded) vividly recaptures his subtle cerebral patterns and concepts.

The crisis in thought, spirit and values has resulted in the isolation of man from his fellow beings. Isolationism has become a modern variety of individualism. Harbhajan Singh is the leading poet-spokesman of this modern sensibility. He rejects traditional thought-patterns as well as old poetics. He was successful in creating a thoughtful distance from his object of experience. His lyrics are full of artistic images and subtle feelings. He achieves a singular elegance and maturity in *Lāsān* (Whip Strokes) and *Adrāt* (Midnight). His poetry is full of spontaneity and originality, freeing itself from traditional bondage. His dramatic monologues vividly present the conflicts between the old and new values of life. In *Nā Dhūpe Nā Chāven* (Neither in Sun nor in Shade) and *Saṛak de Safe te* (On the Leaf of Road) he is at his best when he narrates the inhuman effects of the machine culture. He describes the feelings of alienation and despair in modern life; he expresses the hollow, counterfeit feelings that grow in the human mind. His poetry deals with a world of split personalities surrounded by impotent and hollow persons:

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My wife cleaning the house
Throws out the waste
I fear
She may not see me

(tr. from *Aprāmāṇīk*)

He describes modern man's state of tension and restlessness. But even in this chaotic situation, he cares enough to make human life and values significant and useful. He emerges, in *Tār Tuptā* (String Drop) and other writings, as a humanist poet committed to the betterment of mankind.

New Forms

The narrative, dramatic and the lyrical forms of modern Punjabi poetry are full of conspicuous innovations. There is a continuous tendency to blend the genres. The popular *ghazal*, for instance, is used by traditional *ghazal* writers and new poets alike to express their new thoughts, making it a most popular genre of contemporary Punjabi poetry. The *ghazal* form suits modern life as it enables the expression of an idea or emotion in a precise and concise manner. This trend of experimentation has attracted several Punjabi poets who have changed and made innovations in the traditional and formal characteristics of the *ghazal*. Some of the notable *ghazal* writers in Punjabi are Mohan Singh, Thakur Bharti (Ṭhākur Bhārti, b. 1911), Takhat Singh (Takhat Siṅg, b. 1914), Gurcharan Singh (b. 1917), Sadhu Singh Hamdard (Sādhu Siṅg Hamdard, b. 1918), Harbhajan Singh, Diwan Singh (Divān Siṅg, b. 1920), Surjit Rampuri (Surjīt Rāmpuri, b. 1926), Jagtar (Jagtār, b. 1935), Misha, Ajaib Singh Hundal (Ajaib Siṅg Hundel, b. 1939), Ajaib Chitarkar (Ajaib Citarkar, b. 1924) and Surjit Pattar.

Punjabi free verse is the most popular medium these days. It is a unique artistic method that tries to give proper form to poetic content. As the new poets try to produce poetry that is spontaneous, natural and true to everyday life, they tend to bring the rhythm of the poetic language closer to the rhythm of the spoken word. This poetry has its own qualities of image-organization, logical continuity and dramatic presentation.

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Sanskrit

S. B. WARNEKAR

The activity of making poetry in Sanskrit did not cease after Jagannatha Pandita and Nilakantha Diksita of the 17th century; it continued with the old themes taken mostly from the Indian Epics and Puranas dealing with certain aspects of the stories of Rama, Krishna or other famous puranic characters. Besides, poems of all types, and even dramas, were written in praise of kings or local chieftains by pandits patronized by them.

The practice of the ancient poets like, Subandhu, Kaviraja, Sandhyakaranandin and Dhananjaya (Jaina poet) composing *kāvyas* with double or triple meanings has also been continued. Thus we have the *Yādavarāghavīyam* of Venkatadhvarin (17th century), *Rāghavayādavapāṇḍavīyam* of Chidambarakavi (17th century), *Rāghavanaiṣadhīyam* of Haradatta (18th century), *Kosalabhosalīyam* of Seshachalapati (18th century), to mention only a few prominent

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works. They all show the peculiar flexibility of the Sanskrit language, as well as the mastery of the poets over it. Krishnamurti and Charla Bhasyakarla Sastrin (both 19th century) wrote only one verse in *Anuṣṭup* metre called *Kaṅkaṇabandharāmāyaṇa*. The single verse conveys 64 and 128 meanings respectively, if read in a particular order. These meanings had to be explained by the poets themselves in their commentaries as otherwise they would have been unintelligible.

Incorporating the examples of grammatical rules in a literary work has not been unknown to Sanskrit. The *Bhattikāvya* of the 5th century remains a leader of this branch. During the modern period also, this special form of traditional literature did not remain untouched. The *Mohabhaṅgam* (1976), a *mahākāvya* in eight cantos by R. V. Joshi, employs many verbal forms which are not usually found elsewhere. But all of them sounded rather monotonous, in the sense that they did not deviate from the path of the traditional poets in the usage of poetical conventions or descriptions of men and matters. Most of them did not show any new approach to the theme, nor did they effect any improvement in the form of expression. Since these can be regarded as traditional poetry, although relatively modern in chronology, we are not going to deal with them in this article, but confine ourselves to the creative output in Sanskrit which represents a new spirit, a novel theme, or some innovations in using the conventions and idioms as a result of Sanskrit writers coming into contact with the English language and the ideas obtained from the West.

Panegyrical Poems

Royal and heroic personalities have always remained a pet subject for the Sanskrit poets. Accordingly poems dealing with the life and activities of leaders of war and peace sprang up. Chatrapati Sivaji's exploits caught the imagination of many poets. The *Śivabhāratam* of Kavindra Paramananda of Maharashtra (17th century), *Śivājīcaritram* by Kalidasa Vidyavinoda (19th century), *Śivarājavijayam* by Ambikadatta Vyasa, who is acclaimed as modern Banabhatta on account of his wonderful prose style, *Śivāvatāraprabandha* by V. V. Sovani, *Śivakāvyam* by Purushottam, *Śivarājyodayam* in 68 cantos by S. B. Warnekar (which won the author the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1974), *Kṣatrapaticaritam* by Tripathi of Varanasi are some important works on the life of Sivaji. The Muslim rulers were also not spared by the Sanskrit Pandits and Jagannatha himself was the path-finder. The *Jahāṅgīrcaritam* of Rudrakavi (17th century), *Gajanīmahammadcaritam* of Ramarya (19th century), *Vijayapūrkatha* of Pandurangakavi and *Sultāncaritam* of Chajjurama are in praise of the Muslim rulers as indicated by the titles.

When the British became the rulers of India, Queen Victoria, Edward VII, King George V and Queen Mary also became the subject-matter of *mahākāvyas* and *khaṇḍakāvyas* written in Sanskrit. *Victoriācarita-saṁgraha* (1889) by Keralavarma Valiya Koil Thampuran, *Victoriāpraśasti* (1892) by Pandit Vrajanatha Sastri composed on the occasion of her Majesty's jubilee in 1887, *Prītikusumāñjali* (1897) compiled by the Pandits of Benares to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee, *Victoriāmāhātmya* (1898) by Raja Sir Sourindra Mohan Tagore, *Vijayinīkāvyam* (1902) by Srisvar Vidyalankar Bhattacharya are in praise of Queen Victoria. Even an elegy named *Aśrubindukāvyam* (1901) on the death of Queen Victoria was written by Yadavesvara Tarkaratna. Modelled on the lines of Kalidasa's *Raghuvaṁśa* is the *Āṅgalasāmrājyam* by A. R. Rajaraja Varma, the grammarian poet of Kerala. The First World War was the subject of *Āṅgalajarmanīyuddhavivaraṇa* (1924) by Tirumala Bukkapattanam Srinivasacharya, while P. V. Ramachandra Acharya sang of the peace after war in his *Samaraśāntimahotsava* (1924). *Yaduvṛddhasauhārddam* (1937) by Gopal Aiyangar is also interesting, since, it is based on the sensational romance and abdication of Edward VIII.

A number of *mahākāvyas* with modern themes have appeared from almost all regions of the country, especially after the Independence. Besides, all types of stage plays have also been produced with new themes or with a new approach to the traditional themes. Lyric-poems, *sandeśas* and collections of short poems, besides translations into Sanskrit from English and modern Indian languages are in abundance. We will try to make a brief survey of this vast output in Sanskrit literature which can be termed as Modern Poetry.

Mahākāvya. On the lives of great religious teachers and reformers, like the Buddha, Christ, Sankaracharya and others, many poems with a new approach were written (cf. Biographical Writings). The *Yaśodharāmahākāvyam* (1976) in 20 cantos by Ogatee Parikshit Sarma concentrates on the reactions and emotions of Yasodhara, the wife of Prince Siddhartha, when she was left behind with her child by her husband who suddenly renounced the world. The *Kristubhāgavatam* in 33 cantos (1976) by P. C. Devassia which has won the Sahitya Akademi Award deals with the life and teachings of Christ gathered mainly from the gospels. The style is extremely lucid and simple and the author has brought out all the main events in the life of Christ. The approach of the poet to the theme appears, in a way, revolutionary, for he uses striking parallels drawn from Indian mythology. For example, while speaking about Judas selling his Master for some pieces of silver, the vedic narrative of Ajigarta who sold his child Sunasepha for 100 cows, comes to the mind of the poet.

The *mahākāvya* therefore suggests itself as the work of a devoted Christian and a cultured Indian of the 20th century.

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The description of the sunset following the well-known Sermon of the Mount is worth noting:

> The sun having drunk the ambrosia of Christ's words which were eternally fresh and capable of putting an end to the pains of worldly existence, lost his excess of heat, withdrew his rays to himself, put on saffron clothes coloured by the evening time and entered the cave fit for meditation. (tr.)

The *Yeśusaurabham* is another poem on the greatness of Christ by Somavarma Raja. Shivadas Barlingay of Nagpur published his *Śrīmadādyaśaṁkarajanmakālakāvyam* in Saka era 1871, mainly discussing the date of the great Sankaracharya. Satyavrat Sastri of Delhi University wrote *Śrī Guru Govindacaritam* (1967) on the life and teachings of the tenth guru of the Sikhs. This won him an award of the Sahitya Akademi. Although the two *mahākāvyas*, the *Sītācaritam* (1975) of Revaprasad Dwivedi and *Suratacaritam* (1967) by Kshmadhara Simha Sarma deal with the puranic characters, they breathe a fresh modernism in the delineation of characters and descriptions of events. The *Śrīnārāyaṇavijayam* (1971) by K. Balarama Panikkar describes the life and teachings of Narayana Guru, a saint and social reformer of Kerala, in 21 cantos. The author has himself explained the poems in his commentary in Sanskrit. The *Tyāgarājacarita* by Sundaresa Sarma and *Dīkṣitendra Carita* (1979) by V. Raghavan deal with the lives of the great composers of Carnatic music, Tyagaraja and Muttuswami Dikshitar, respectively. For the latter work the title *Kavikōkila* was conferred on the author by the senior Swamiji of Kāñcikāmakoṭi Pīṭham Mutt. P. K. Narayana Pillai has published his *mahākāvya Viśvabhānu* (1980) which deals with the life and teachings of Swami Vivekananda in 21 cantos.

Historical Mahākāvya

There are also a few *mahākāvyas* which are historical. The *Pūrvabhāratam* (1974) in 19 cantos written by Prabhudatta Swami (Meerut) is a unique work in the sense that it deals with the history of India beginning from the mythical Manu and ending with the invasion of Alexander the Great and his encounter with Puru. The author does not follow the history given by the modern historians, instead he depends mainly upon Indian tradition and literary evidences. In the epilogue of the *mahākāvya* the poet says that the pure history of the Aryans has been misinterpreted and stained by the foreign writers; he has therefore written the work to present the real history of the Aryans through poetry:

> vihitaṁ tūjjvalaṁ śauryam dharmaṁ ca kaluṣīkṛtam/
> videśyair lekhakair dhūrtair āryāṇāṁ kanakaprabham//
> kṛtsnam śodhyituṁ tac ca cirāya bhuvi rakṣitum/
> śuddhaitihāsikaṁ vastu kāvye'smin viniveśitam//

The Indian mind which has always been seeking harmony and synthesis instead of harping on differences is aptly pictured in the following stanza in support of admitting the Buddha, the rebel, as an *avatāra* by the Hindu society.

> sakhe virodham parihartukāmah
> samanvayārthī sumatir dvijaughah/
> tathāgatam satyapi mārgabhede
> na manyate kiṁ jagadīśvarāṁśam// (7.49)

In diction, choice of words and figures of speech this poem stands remarkably distinct. The *Kēraḷodaya* (1976) in 21 cantos containing nearly 2,300 verses deals with the entire history of Kerala, political, social and cultural, against the background of South Indian history. The author K. N. Ezhuttachan prefers to interpret history from the Marxian point of view. The uprise of the labour shouting for its rights and privileges is described as follows:

> karmāntikānāṁ cirabandhanogro
> vargāvabodhapratikārabhīmah/
> dūrāt samaśrūyata cakravāḷe
> kramapravṛddho gurusiṁhanādah//

> (The fierce roaring of the workers oppressed for a long time and swelling with the feeling of revenge on understanding the class struggle began to be heard echoing in the horizon).

This *mahākāvya* is a piece of real poetry which annexed the Sahitya Akademi Award.

The reply of Sankaracharya to Rajasekhara (canto 9) when the latter offered him the kingdom, shows the poet's sense of propriety. The substance of the Acharya's teachings is beautifully codified therein. The poet has introduced many alien words into Sanskrit with a view to making the ideas understood easily by the readers. *Duniyātale* ('duniyav' —Arabic word meaning the earth); *hourī* (Arabic, meaning a celestial nymph); *harijana* (coined by Gandhiji and meaning the scheduled caste); *Khurānaka* (for the holy Quran): *Kurava* (the nomadic tribe common in the southern states); *pulaya* (meaning an untouchable in Malayalam), etc.

Poems on National Leaders. Naturally Mahatma Gandhi and his teachings have figured as theme for many a Sanskrit *kāvya*. Bhagavad Acharya, a North Indian Sanyasin wrote a *mahākāvya* entitled *Bhāratapārijāta* (1938) in the traditional style consisting of 27 cantos. He describes the life of Mahatma Gandhi from his childhood, up to the formation of Congress cabinets in six provinces and summarizes Gandhiji's preachings. The gifted lady Kshamā Rao of Bombay and Tadapatrikar of Poona have summarized the teachings of the Mahatma in their works, the *Satyāgrahagītā* (1932) and the *Uttara-satyāgrahagītā* (1944) respectively, adopting the style of the *Bhagavadgītā*. The

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Gāndhisūktimuktāvali by C. D. Deshmukh contains the important sayings of the Mahatma in readable Sanskrit verses. A number of elegies were the outcome of the gloom in which the tragic and sudden end of Mahatma Gandhi had plunged India. *Mahātmā* (1948) by V. Raghavan, *Mahātmavijayā* (1949) by K. L. V. Sastri, *Śraddhāñjali* (1948) by G. C. Jhala and *Mahātmanirvāṇam* (1954) by V. Narayanan Nair belong to this category.

Political leaders have been made the heroes of many poems. The *Rājendraprasādābhyudaya* (1960) is a *kāvya* in nine cantos dealing with the life of the first president of the Indian Republic written by Sripada Krishnamurti Sastri who was the first poet laureate of Andhra Pradesh. On Jawaharlal Nehru there are a few *kāvyas* like *Śrineharūcaritam* (1969) by Brahmananda Sukla and *Javāharjyoti* (1977) by Raghunathaprasada Chaturveda. The past presidents of the All India Congress, the Jubilee Session of Congress in 1935 and Subhash Chandra Bose have been eulogized in the *Rāṣṭrapatigaurava* (1938), a collection of poems by Lakshmi Narayan Shambough. V. K. Chatre of Bombay wrote *Subhāśa caritam* in 16 cantos. Somayaji has written a kāvya *Bhārataratnam* in praise of Dr S. Radhakrishnan while the *Indirāgāndhicarita* (1976) by Satyavrat Sastri is a *mahākāvya* in 25 cantos on Indira Gandhi.

New Sandeśa Kāvya

There is a very large number of short poems either in the form of *Sandēśakāvyas* with modern themes and changed pattern or in the form of lyrics including *stōtrās*, expressions of love and appreciation of greatmen and events. These are all either published in contemporary Sanskrit journals or as independent volumes by the authors themselves, with the financial assistance got from the Ministry of Education in quite a few cases. Sanskrit poets from Bengal seem to have such a preference for *sandēśakāvyas* that the late Jateendravimal Choudhuri (a renowned Sanskrit scholar and poet) could write a book in 1953, named *Vaṅgiyadūtakāvyetihāsa* in Sanskrit, in which he has mentioned about 25 *dūtakāvyas* written by the 'modern' Sanskrit poets in Bengal.

The *Mārutsandēśa* (1970) by Sarabhacharya, published in Guntur contains in five sections the message from a young man to his beloved sent through wind, which starts its journey from the Southern sea touching Kanyakumari. The *Madhuvarṣaṇam* (1972) by Durgadatta Sastri (Hoshiarpur) in seven cantos is a message from a young lady to her husband asking him not to return without defeating the enemy in the Indo-China war. It does not conform to the pattern of *Sandēśakāvya* and even excludes the use of the conventional *mandākrāntā* metre.

Lyrical Poems. The life history of R. D. Ranade, the scholar-philosopher is dealt with in the *Śrigurudeva kathāmṛtam* (1971) by Vaman Triyambak Apte. Garikapati Lakshmikantayya who writes profusely in Sanskrit has produced small biographical sketches of men of importance like the pontiff of Sringeri Mutt, Rabindranath Tagore, Jayadeva, Narayanatirtha and Jawaharlal Nehru. The *Jāgaraṇa* (1963) consists of lyrical songs on various themes by Sivasagara Sarma. Mathuranatha who was the Superintendent of Sanskrit studies in Jaipur has some collections of his poems on a variety of subjects. The noted scholar Gopinath Kaviraj observes 'The description of the seasons, the representations of the various moods of the human mind, the delineation with touches of humour at intervals of the darker phases of modern social life, all these have a ring of freshness and spontaneity about them which mark them out as distinctive of true inspiration. The author is at his best in his manipulation of the metres not merely those which are current in the Sanskrit classics but even some new varieties coined by him in imitation of Hindi, Urdu and Persian.' The *Kalpanāsaurabham* (1974) by A. V. Subramanyam, a high ranking officer of the Railways, is a collection of 18 short poems on various themes, and K. Kesavan Nair has collected his 13 short poems in the volume titled *Naivedyam* (1970). Even the reputed scholars of the *śāstrās* have poured out their feelings about the deteriorating moral conditions of our society through their short poems. The *Mātṛparidevanam* (1961) by Panditaraja Achyuta Puduval in 100 verses forms a lament by Mother India on the deterioration of moral principles in her children. In the *Bhāratimanoratha* in 90 verses published at the time of the First World War, M. K. Tatacharya falls into a reverie and calls up visions of the India torn by false ideologies and the India of integrated cultural harmony. In his *Suṣuptivṛtta* (1937) Chittigudur Varadacharya draws the past glory and the present gloom of India. A similar work in three cantos, the *Bhāratigītā* (1950), dealing with the glory of Mother India, her fall and her inspiring message to her children, is by a lady, V. R. Lakshmi Ammal. T. V. Kapali Sastri adorned Mother India on the eve of her Independence in his *Bhāratīstava* (1949). In the same way the *Tarjani* (1970) and *Rāṣṭrapathapradarśanam* (1968) by Durgadatta Sastri contain poems of didactic value and advice to the youngsters. Ottur Unni Nambudiripad has written a number of poems with grace and elegance to convey his devotion to Srikrishna, the eternal youth and unending beauty of Brindavan. C. G. Purushottama of Mysore has published his *Kāvyataraṅgiṇī* (Vol. I, II, 1959, 1967) which contains besides his own lyrical poems, translations from the writings of K. V. Puttappa ('Kuvempu'). Even the western literary form of sonnets is not neglected by Sanskrit poets. T. G. Mainkar has a collection of sonnets in his *Gāyikāpakāram* (1979) in which all the rules of this form of composition including limiting the length of the poem to 14 lines are observed.

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Śatakas. Famous ancient poets like Bhartṛhari, Amaru, Bhallata, Mayura and some others have earned everlasting fame on account of their *śatakas* (collections of one hundred stray verses on a particular topic) dealing with *Śṛṅgāra, Nīti, Vairāgya*, devotion and description of nature. Poets in the modern period have continued the same tradition. The *Vakṣojaśatakam* and *Romāvalīśatakam*, *holikā śatakam* of Vishveshvara (18th century), *Kucaśatakam* of Atreya Srinivasa (18th century), *Jārajaśatakam* of Nilakantha Sarma (19th century) are some typical specimens of modern *Śṛṅgāraśatakāvyās* (erotic verses in hundreds). *Śrimadavadhūta-bhagavad-rāmā-vadāna-śatakam* (Varanasi, 1973) by Satyavrata Singh and *Śrīnivāsaśatakam* (Hyderabad, 1978) by V. Sundara Sarma may also be mentioned here. *Mahiṣaśataka* (1741) of Vancheswara alias Kutti Kavi of Tanjore provides fine satire.

A rendering of one *śloka* is given below:

> O, buffalo, the grains and wealth procured by you by sweat are taken away by the Subedars (the tax-collectors) as if they are their own property; I know the reason, please listen to me! The sons alone take away the wealth of their father either through love or through force.
>
> (tr.)

Sentiment of nationalism is seen in the *śatakas* like the *Bhāratīstava* by Kapali Sastri of Pondicherry. Out of the 14 *śatakas* written by the present author, *Javāharatarangiṇī* (about Jawaharlal Nehru) and *Vināyakavaijayanti* (about Veer Savarkar) are nationalistic in sentiment, while *Rāmakṛṣṇa-paramahaṁsīyam* (translated into English by R.N. Roy) and the *Vātsalyārasāyanam* are devotional.

Gītās. Vasudevananda Sarasvati and Rangavadhuta have written a number of *khaṇḍakāvyas* (short poems) about their deity of worship (Sri Dattatreya) and they are very popular among their thousands of devotees in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Venkatramana of Bangalore has written nine *gītās* called *Navagītakusumāñjali* each one of 108 verses about the deities like Rama, Siva, Ganesa, etc. The *Śramagītā* written by the author about the importance of physical labour in nation building, was published in 1977. Like the *Bhagavadgītā*, the *Śramagītā* is in the form of a dialogue, here between Mahatma Gandhi and his great followers like Jawaharlal and Rajendra Prasad. Among the ancient greats, Kalidasa has been the most popular subject for modern Sanskrit poets. Hundreds of poets have praised him. V. Raghavan has edited a book named *Kālidāsapratibhā* (1955). The author of this article has also written the *Kālidāsa rahasyam* of 135 verses, in which the great national poet is eulogized employing his own similes. Amaranath Pandeya has given short sketches of Sanskrit poets from Valmiki to Sriharsha in his *Saṁskṛta Kavīsamīkṣā* (1977).

Modern Sanskrit Drama

Modern Dṛśya Kāvyas. The output of Sanskrit plays during the 19th and 20th centuries is indeed very vast comprising all the traditional types of *Rūpakas*, besides the plays discarding the traditional technique and following the forms of western varieties of drama. Most of them contain verses interspersed by dialogues in prose. As we do not have a separate chapter on 'modern Sanskrit drama' included in this volume, a brief survey of those dramas which do not follow the old technique, but convey modern ideas with a different approach, are treated here under modern poetry; for in Sanskrit, after all, drama is a *dṛśya kāvya*. (The section on Drama: Sanskrit may be read in conjunction.) Apart from choosing new themes and new heroes for their drama, the playwrights hailing from almost all parts of the country have tried the western techniques of drama on their Sanskrit plays. Thematically, these can be classified as biographical, historical, humorous, mythological, legendary, political, social and miscellaneous plays. If we judge these plays by the primary purpose of drama which is to entertain, many of them have been staged successfully. Certain trends and tendencies, which point to Sanskrit drama shedding its rigid exterior and developing a pliability which incorporates many changes while yet maintaining a continuity with the past, are clearly seen in these plays. Being no longer psychological or spiritual, the Sanskrit drama has been growing social, ethical and intellectual. It no longer maintains an ideal isolation but has started coming closer to society in its trials and tribulations, joys and sorrows, hopes and aspirations. One can see that it is endeavouring now to reflect the renaissance in the Indian society, the rebirth of a nation.

Although Bharata lays down the rules for the use of Prakrit in a play by certain characters and the traditional Sanskrit drama followed those rules, the modern Sanskrit drama as a rule does not use Prakrit language. But of late a tendency is visible to replace Prakrit with modern vernaculars. For example, Mathura Prasad Dixit in his *Bhūbhāroddharaṇam* (1955) puts Hindi in the place of Prakrit, while in his *Bhāratavijayanāṭakam* (1937) Mewari is used. Similarly in his *Pāṇinīyanāṭakam* (Varanasi, 1964) Gopala Sastri Darsanakesari employs Bhojpuri in place of Prakrit.

With regard to expression also a tendency to shed puritanism and incorporate some foreign words is visible. English words such as badminton, tennis, police, radio station, bus, etc. are found used either as they are or in their Sanskritized form.

Similarly, in technique also some Sanskrit plays present their break with the past; the *Nāndī* and the *Bharatavākya* are no more considered to be essential. 'Acts' are replaced by 'Scenes' as in the works of the Calcutta scholar J. B. Chowdhury. Shorter plays, especially one-act plays of modern type are not wanting. Even radio plays and shadow

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plays like the *Chāyāśākuntalam* by T. T. Parikh have made their appearance. There is also a growing tendency among Sanskrit playwrights as well the writers of the *mahākāvyas* to adopt the burning problems of the day as their themes. The *Kāśmīrasandhānasamudyamah* (1963) and *Hyderābād-vijayam* (1954) by the Andhra scholar Nirpaje Bhima Bhat, on the problems of Kashmir and Hyderabad, respectively, as also the *Mahimamayabhāratam* (1960) a play on the irrigation policy of India by J. B. Choudhury can be cited as examples. On the social problem of dowry we have a beautiful play the *Vidhiviparyāsa* by the Bengal scholar Jivan Nyayatirtha, who has about 20 plays in Sanskrit to his credit. The periodical news in the newspapers about the change of sex has tickled the imagination of the Sanskritists too. The *Sāmavatam* (1900) by the Benares scholar Ambikadatta Vyasa, *Puruṣaramaṇīyam* by Jivan Nyayatirtha and *Śṛṅgāranāradīyam* (1956) by T. Mahalinga Sastri are based on this topic. We even have a full tragedy in contravention with the rules of Bharata in the *Pariṇāma Vikrama* (1959) in seven acts by the Nepal Raj Pandit Chaudanatha Bhatta Roy which presents illuminating discussions on the philosophy of Kant and Hegel as also on communism, socialism, democracy and humanism. Many writers have also replaced verses with songs. The *Kālidāsacaritam* (1961) of Velankar, a renowned author of many Sanskrit dramas, *Saṁyogitāsvayamvaram*, *Catrapatisāmrājyam* and *Pratāpa-vijayam* (1929) by Mulaishankar Maneklal Yajnik and *Parivartana* (1949) by Kapiladeva Dwivedi contain songs in place of verses. V. Raghavan has composed even some operas in Sanskrit following the western techniques of this type of stage play. V. Krishnan Tampi's three plays, *Pratikṛiyā*, *Vanajyotsnā* and *Dharmasya Sūkṣmā-gatiḥ* (Trivandrum, 1924) in Sanskrit express the modern spirit and features. The *Amaramaṅgala* (1939) of Panchananam Tarkabhattacharya is a historical play relating to Rajaput annals, *Snuṣāvijaya* (The Triumph of the Daughter-in-Law, 1942–43) by Sundararajakavi and *Ubhayarūpaka* of Y. Mahalinga Sastri are modern social comedies. Kshama Rao's *Bālavidhavā* (The Young Widow, 1955) in three scenes deals with the social problem of disallowing the remarriage of widows. *Śārdūla śatakam* of B. K. Bhattacharya deals with the labour problem in a bus company. There are also many short plays following the old types of Samavakāra, Prahasaṅa, Vyāyoga and Bhāṇa.

There are also Sanskrit poems in the form of travelogues. V. S. Ramaswami Sastri of Madura published his *Tribilvadalacampū* (1937) describing the author's all-India pilgrimage. This includes descriptions not only of holy places, shrines, etc. but also of modern institutions like universities, offices and archaeological sites—in fact everything that would interest a modern cultured man. Sakharam Sastri's travels in the Konkan in 1924 are the theme of a *kāvya* by him. V. Ch. Chabra, who was in the Archaeology Department of Government of India, has written a poem, the *Nyaktara-janapada-śobhā*, on scenes in Holland, where he studied. The subject of the poem *Dhārāyaśodhārā* (1952) by D. M. Kulkarni of Satara is the glories of Dhara in Malva.

Translated Poetry

Ancient and medieval Sanskrit writers never thought of translating poetical works from other languages into Sanskrit. Translating literary and other works from Sanskrit into regional languages had started at least by the 11th century but the process of translating literary works from other languages into Sanskrit was started only in the 20th century. For, compared to the literature in Sanskrit, the regional languages were very undeveloped with no distinct literature of their own. By contact with the English language, and the Eastern literatures brought through it, the process of translating from other languages into Sanskrit began in the 20th century.

European Languages. Many poems and dramas of Shakespeare, and other famous poets of English literature, have been made available in Sanskrit by way of translations or adaptations. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appeared in Sanskrit under the name *Vāsantikasvapna* (1892) the translator being R. Krishnamacharya. *Twelfth Night* finds its Sanskrit version in the *Dvādaśi Rātri* (1965) by Ananta Tripathi Sharma where all the proper names are Indianized. Ramachandra Acharya published in his *Laghukāvyamālā* series (Madras, 1924) the *Puruṣaśāsaptaka* (adapted from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*), *Sumanoratha* (adaptation of Roger's *A Wish*), *Pitṛupadeśa* and *Candrasena* (adapted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) and *Sādhuvādamañjarī* (adapted from Browning's *All's Right with the World*). Shama Sastri of Mysore translated in 1931 the *Amelia Galetti*, a play of the German poet Lessing while Tadpatrikar produced an adaptation of Goethe's *Faust* in his *Viśvamohana* in seven acts (Poona Orientalist, XIV). Rajaraja Varma of Trivandrum adapted *Othello* in prose and C. Venkataramanayya of Mysore *The Cup of Tennyson* in his *Kamalāvijayanāṭaka*. *The Blind Boy* of Milton finds its Sanskrit version in *Āndhabālakah* (1938) of H. V. Narayana of Mysore.

Tamil. Mahalinga Sastri has translated, *Nalavaḷi-vākkhaṇḍam* of the famous Tamil poetess Avvai into Sanskrit verses. He has employed new metres in this translation. In the introduction the translator has narrated his own experience in translating into Sanskrit from a regional language:

> My experiments in translating English and Tamil poems have shown me that the poetic efforts in other languages come off beautifully in Sanskrit and even look enriched

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more tidy and majestic in the new garb. Every attempt in that line seems to reveal to me the immense potentialities of this most ancient language, its flexibility, roominess, surprising aptitude for supplying into felicitous moulds of excelling brilliance and brevity. Due to the kinship of two cultures, translation from Tamil into Sanskrit is not a literary feat, but an easy walk-over into an equally commodious well-flourished adjacent parlour.

Sriram Desikan translated several poems of the national poet Subramania Bharati into Sanskrit under the name *Bhāratiyār kāvyasaṁskṛtānuvādah* (1963). The Vaishnavite canonical hymns in Tamil have been translated into Sanskrit by Melkote T. Narasimha Aiyengar (1867–1935) as well as by the prolific writer Prativadibhayankaram Annangaracharya of Kanchipuram. Appa Vajapeyi has translated the famous *Tirukkuṟaḷ* into Sanskrit under the title *Sunītikusumamālā* (1927). P. Narayanan Nair has rendered the Tamil classic *Śilappadikāram* into a Sanskrit *kāvya* of six cantos entitled *Kaṇṇaki Kōvalam* (1955). The *Gīrvāṇaśaṭhagopasahasram* of Venkataramanacharya of the 19th century contains a number of devotional poems rendered from Tamil into Sanskrit. Subrahmanya Sastri of Kadayakkudi, a poet of the 19th century, author of the *Vallibāhuleyam*, wrote several replicas of Tamil folk songs, such as *Haltesa*, *Dolāgīti*, *Virāyippāṭṭu*, *Kattāyippāṭṭu*, *Taṅgame Taṅgami*. His Sanskrit version of the Tamil didactic work *Nāladiyār* is yet to be published.

Telugu. Renderings from Telugu into Sanskrit makes a sizable contribution to modern Sanskrit poetry. S. T. G. Varadachariar, a well-known scholar and founder of the Narasimha Sanskrit College, Chittigudur, has translated *śatakas* like *Vemana-Śataka*, *Sumati-Śataka*, *Dāśarathi-Śataka*, *Kṛṣṇa-Śataka* and *Bhāskara-Śataka*. Sannidhanam Suryanarayana Sastri has translated several *prabandhas* from Telugu into Sanskrit. *Vemana-Śataka* is so popular in Andhradesa that it found another Sanskrit translator in Sriramachandramurthy. Sitapati has also rendered many poems from Telugu, among which the old musical *padas* of Kshetraya and the modern poem *Pūrṇammā* by Gurazada Appa Rao in the *Muttyālasara* metre are worth mentioning.

Malayalam. E. V. Raman Namputhiri of Trivandrum has translated poems from the modern Malayalam trio, Kumaran Asan, Vallathol Narayana Menon and Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer and published them under the titles *Kerala-bhāṣā-vivartāh* (1948) and *Mahākavi-kṛtayah* (1945). M. A. Kurukkal translated Asan's poem *Cintāviṣṭā Sītā* (1979). *Cintāviṣṭayāya Sītā* of Kumaran Asan has two more translations, one by N. Gopala Pillai in the *Sītāvicāralahari* (1979) which has a Sanskrit commentary by D. Damodarapisharoti and the other in the *Cintāviṣṭā Sītā* (1978) by V. C. Kunjuraman Vaidyar. A *mahākāvya* called *Keśavīyam*, written by K. C. Kesava Pillai in Malayalam dealing with the story of Krishna acquiring the syamantaka jewel and Satyabhāma, has been rendered into Sanskrit by K. P. Narayana Pisharoty without losing the lucidity and charm of the original. The same scholar has translated into Sanskrit the Malayalam poem *Mahātyāgī* on the life of Christ written by M. O. Avara. E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma has rendered into Sanskrit the one-act play entitled *Sandhyā* (Evening, 1964) by G. Sankara Kurup. Manan Gurukkal has translated Kumaran Asan's *Līlā* into Sanskrit but the work is still lying in manuscript form. *Jñānappāna* of Punthanam Nambuthiri (17th century) written in simple Malayalam has been very popular in Kerala. This has been translated into Sanskrit by N. D. Krishnan Unni (1979).

Other Indian Languages. The *Rubāiyāt* of Omar Khayyam has many translations in Sanskrit. Out of them those by Pandit Giridhar Sharma (*Amarasūktisudhākara*, 1929), M. R. Rajagopal Aiyengar and P. V. Krishnan Nair (*Madirotsava*, 1945) are well known. Kapali Sastri translated three poems of Aurobindo into Sanskrit and published them under the title *Kavitāñjali* (1946). K. Tiruvenkatacharya of Mysore has produced in manuscript a Sanskrit rendering of the *Rāmacaritamānas* of Tulsidas. The *Jñāneśvari* has been partially translated (only six chapters) by Pandit Oka in *anuṣṭup* metre in 1929. The work was continued by Justice A. V. Khasnis. The *Kekāvalī* of the Marathi poet Moropant has its translation in Sanskrit by D. T. Sakrikar under the title *Gīrvāṇakekāvalī* (1946). The *Gītāñjali* of Tagore has more than one rendering in Sanskrit like those by Upadhyaya (1961) and Pullela Sri Ramachandrudu (1962). Sanskrit renderings of Rabindranath Tagore's poems by Phatiklal Das have appeared in the *Mañjūṣā*.

The survey of the modern poetry in Sanskrit in the foregoing pages leads us to the following observations:

(1) Sanskrit has always been alive to the socio-religio-political situations arising in the country. It has never remained aloof from the mainstream of life.

(2) The creative writers in Sanskrit did not fight shy of adopting new techniques and methods of expression from the other literatures available to them.

(3) Sanskrit literature has not remained impervious in the modern age. Though the volume of output is not enormous in quantity, it can stand comparison with the modern languages.

(4) The rich resources of the Sanskrit language make it a fit vehicle for expressing even the most subtle thoughts and sensitive ideas. In a country torn by clashing interests of linguistic groups Sanskrit has remained a glorious integrating factor bringing the different ethnic and linguistic communities of India closer to each other.

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Sindhi

H. I. SADARANGANI

Introduction

Although Persian made its advent in Sind in the 13th century, and held its sway for about 600 years, the first and oldest traces of measured verse in Sindhi are available in the *Maulūds* (poems in praise of Prophet Muhammad) of Makhdūm Abdur Rauf (1682–1752) and then in the *ghazals* of Nūr Muhammad 'Khasta' (possible date, 1717), whose compositions, apart from observing the stylistic norms of *matla* (the first opening verse rhyming together) and *maqta* (the concluding couplet carrying the *nom-de-plume* of the poet), also embody the sentiments relating to love, so essential for *ghazals* (a love-poem, roughly like the ode with 5 to 17 couplets). Sabit Ali Shah (Thābit 'Alī Ṣāh, 1740–1810) composed a number of *qaṣīdas* (panegyrics; a long poem in praise of the patron with couplets ranging from 12 to 125) and *ghazals*, and produced 4 volumes of *marthiyas* (elegies specially mourning Husain Ali's martyrdom in Karbala) on the pattern of the Urdu elegy-writer Anees. He wrote a piece of *hajva* (satire) entitled *Ciṇiga* (spark), on the Mullas of Sehwan, and also introduced Sub-forms—*murabba* (foursome, a poem of stanzas having four hemistichs) and *musaddas* (a poem of stanzas with six hemistichs). Thus, by the time the British took over Sind (1843), Persian prosody had made many inroads into Sindhi poetry.

Poets Who Followed the Persian Poetical Form

After the introduction of the present Perso-Arabic script in 1853 the Sindhi-loving poets turned to the Persian poetic forms such as *ghazals*, *qaṣīdas*, *rubāīs* (quatrain), *mathnavīs* (a poem in doublets with each couplet rhyming together). In the beginning the thoughts were simple and generally didactic, and there was a limited use of metres. Folk-tales of love formed the content of many a *ghazal*. Muslims and Hindus vied with each other in the production of works, original as well as in translations, especially in the composition of *dīvāns* (a collection of poems in alphabetical order of rhyme-endings, covering all the 52 Sindhi letters). A history of the Kalhoras and the Talpurs, covering about 50 years of their reign and wars, was recorded in verse. Several popular tales from Sind, India and of foreign origin, were poeticized. Humorous and satirical poems were produced and chronograms written to commemorate noteworthy events or occasions. Poets like Muhammad Qāsim (1806–81), Ghulām Muhammad Ṣāh 'Gadā' (1826–1905) and Mīr Abdul Husain Sāngi (1851–1924), who were bilingual, wrote both in Persian and in Sindhi. Naturally, a lot of Persian words, images and allusions crept into their Sindhi compositions. This enriched the language and improved the diction.

Thus opened a new chapter in the history of Sindhi poetry, superseding the old *dohā*, *sorthā*, etc. and introducing Persian forms with elements of love and mysticism, sarcasm and praise.

Gul Muhammad 'Gul' (1807–55) was the first to compose his *dīvān* of *ghazals* in Sindhi. His *ghazals* are didactic, written in words and idioms which are mostly Sindhi. The poet looked at various crafts and industries from his own angle and derived both moral and spiritual conclusions. Apart from the elements of nature, he skilfully portrays the sons of the soil.

Gul is also the first Sindhi poet to use English words in his compositions. For instance,

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The *pistol* hanging on the skirt of your love
Shot cartridges at my heart and soul.

(tr. H.I.S.)

Muhammad Qasim was next to Gul in completing his *dīvān* (1875) of *ghazals*, *qaṣīdas*, *mathnavīs*, *qitas* (fragment of a long poem like *qaṣīda*), etc. which was published by the Vernacular Literature Committee three years later. He was a distinguished scholar of Persian and Arabic, known for his metrical excellence and, as L. H. Ajwani puts it, 'His poetry is frequently interlarded with Persian and Arabic verses of his own composition' (L. H. Ajwani, *History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 144). He was in fact the first to bring in original Arabic verses in Sindhi measured poetry. To him also goes the credit of introducing *tarjī band* (return-tie, a poem of many stanzas of which the last hemistich is repeated in the succeeding stanza) in Sindhi poetry. Much of his work, however, is theological and didactic and there is hardly any portrayal of nature or man. Many of his *qaṣīdas* were motivated not by the fullness of his heart but by the emptiness of his pocket.

Muhammad Fāzil Ṣāh (1836–1900), a learned jurist, was also an author of a *dīvān*. His poetical work consists of *ghazals* and *kāfīs* (a type of poem peculiar to the language, often translated as ballad). He is the only poet of his period whose compositions show acquaintance with the sciences of astrology, medicine and alchemy. He is also the first to introduce chronograms (year of birth, death, victory, construction of a building, etc.) according to the *Abjad* system of numerals. (Each letter in the Arabic alphabet has been given some value and accordingly the letters of words or phrases when calculated give the year.) Apart from 'didactical elaborateness', there is an element of humour and satire in his compositions.

Hāfiẓ Hāmid (1832–97) was yet another celebrity. This blind poet, considered by some as the 'Milton of Sind', specialized in *Khutbas* (addresses in poems) which he used to recite in the mosques at the time of Friday prayers. His poetical work entitled *Armaghān-e-Hāmid* contains the wails and plaints of some of the heroines referred to in classical Sindhi poetry and shows the composer's skill in portraying nature, character-delineation and narration of events. Some of his poems are satirical.

Shamsuddin 'Bulbul' (1857–1919), a zamindar-poet and journalist, was a colourful personality. He was the first to arouse the apathetic Muslims of Sind to agitate for their political rights. His *dīvān* (1891) includes *mukhammuses* (a poem of stanzas having five hemistichs in each) and humorous and satirical poems, some of which have the first hemistich in Sindhi and the next in Persian. As the learned author of *History of Sindhi Literature* sums up, his verse is 'refreshing with its digs at jackets, pantaloons, sideroots, shaving of the beard, etc. Even in *Karīmā Natural*, which is in *mathnavi* form, he has one line on the use of whisky, and the petting of lapdogs, and another from the Persian of Saadi, the author of *Karīmā*' (L. H. Ajwani, *History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 147). Here are the first few distichs of the *mathnavi*, containing 71 doublets in all:

Bring me half a pound of the best whisky,
'O Generous One, have mercy on our condition'.
I am trying my best to travel to foreign lands,
'Except Thee, there is none to listen to our plaints.'
Lest these Mullas confuse and confound us,
'Protect us from the wrong path.'

(tr. H.I.S.)

More of a translator than an original writer, Mirzā Qalīch Beg (1853–1929) was a high revenue official who mastered Persian, Arabic, Urdu and English, and was acquainted with many other languages. He was most prolific and has enriched Sindhi with nearly 300 books, in prose and poetry. He was the first and remains the best translator of Khayyam's *Rubāiyāt*, of which he has translated about 130 stanzas. He has also rendered the Persian poet Shabistari's mystic poem *Gulṣan-e-Rāz* (Garden of Mystery) in Sindhi *mathnavi* with *Kaṣf-e-Aijāz* (Unravelling of Miracle) as its title. Poetic pieces translated by him from English, Persian, Arabic and Urdu find their place in *Amūl Māṇik* (Priceless Gems) and *Motiyun jī Dabulī* (Casket of Pearls). His *dīvān*, including his original poems published in *Saudā-e-Khām* (Unripe Melancholia), contains about 450 *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas*.

Qalich was an excellent craftsman and was most proficient in the use of Persian images and allusions. He also introduced *Hazaliyāt* (facetious verse) in Sindhi poetry.

His contemporary Ghulam Muhammad Shah 'Gada' (1826–1905) was also an eminent poet of Persian and Sindhi who used to participate frequently in *muṣairas* (poetic competitions) in both the languages. He is well known for his *dīvān* of Odes. In his *ghazals* one notices coherence and continuity of theme through the different couplet units which, by practice, are separate 'wholes'.

But the most outstanding among the *ghazal*-writers of the 19th century was Mir Abdul Husain 'Sāngī' (1851–1924), who composed two volumes of *dīvān*. The first volume contains *ghazals* and *qaṣīdas*, and the second *ghazals*, *qaṣīdas*, *kāfīs* and miscellaneous poems. He is remembered for his *ghazals* in which he has poured individual experience and celebrated love frankly and uninhibitedly. He employs natural similes and metaphors, taken from familiar surroundings. For example:

The finest muslin sent for from Dacca
Weighs heavily on the delicate body of my beloved.

(tr. H.I.S.)

Lilaram Watanmal 'Khākī' (afterwards Lilārām Singh), a civil judge, was a Sufi who at the same time believed in

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the Vedanta and the teachings of Guru Nanak. He was the first of the two non-Muslims of his period, who composed a *dīvān*. He knew English, Sanskrit, Hindi, Punjabi and Siraiki (dialect of the Upper Sind), and his *ghazals* have words of these languages.

The other was Asūmal (1853–?), popularly known as Sūfī Asūrām. He was both Sufi and Vedantist and has propagated in his poems Sufistic thoughts as well as the doctrines of Yoga. His poems provide a blend of recondite Sanskrit and Arabic words.

Mathnavis in Sindhi. The first poet from the Tālpur family who composed metrical verses in Sindhi was Mīr Hasan Alī Khān 'Hasan' (1824–1909), the eldest son of the last ruling Amir, Mīr Nasīr Khān. He is famous for his *Sindh Jo Ṣāhnāmo* (Shahnama of Sind), 'a spirited narrative' of half a century of troubled events in Sind beginning from the rule of Sarfarāz Khān Kalhoro to the time of Mīr Murād Alī Khān. It is the first epic poem in Sindhi literature, and is full of patriotic fervour and political emotions.

Other noteworthy *mathnavi* writers of this period were Ghulam Murtaza Shah, the composer of *Yūsuf-Zulekhā* (a Persian romance based on Arabic sources), Muhammad Vāsil and Munshī Khudābakhṣ, the narrators of the romantic folk-tale *Sasuī-Punhūn* (love tale of classical period) and Ghulam Muhammad Shah who authored *Sikandar Nāmo* (book on Alexander).

The Well-known Musaddas. *Musaddas* was yet another sub-form of Persian poetry on which Allahbakhsh 'Abojho' (?–1901) tried his hand with great success. The collection of his *musaddases* entitled *Musaddas Abojho* is divided into two parts: part I is a translation of the Urdu poet Hali's *Musaddas-e-Hālī*, describing the glory that was Islam; part II is devoted to the movements of activating Islam in other parts of India, led by Sayyid Amir Ali, and also in praise of Hasanali Effendi, his patron and co-worker for the uplift of Sindhi Muslims.

A Change in Form and Content

Although the practice of composing love-lyrics and producing *dīvāns* continued during the first four decades of the 20th century, the very first ten years saw a change both in content and poetic form through the compositions of a humble schoolteacher, Kishincand 'Bevas' (1884–1947). He has written some *ghazals*, *gīts*, *dohās*, *kāfīs*, etc. but they do not form a substantial portion of his works. Even in them he has avoided hackneyed metaphors and similes. Instead of soaring in the sky, 'beating his luminous wings in vain', he came nearer earth, expressing the poor man's woes. *Khalq* (creatures) became more important to him than the *Khāliq* (creator). In his own words: 'No service is better than the service to mankind'.

He wrote forcefully, in a language which was sweet and melodious, on poverty, death, peasants, workers, the status of women, etc. Here is a stanza from his *Poor Man's Hut*:

> The sun and the moon peep through its crevices,
> The beams of stars and Pleiades creep inside,
> The wind murmurs through the holes of its walls,
> The rain sprinkles water, dripping down the roof;—
> It is a gift of Nature for perfect health
> O, God! may the poor man's hut suffer no damage!
>
> (tr. H.I.S.)

Ṣīrīn Ṣair (Sweet Poems—for children) and *Sāmūṇḍī Sipīan* (Sea Oysters) are considered his best collections of poems. In the last named book, which contains modern thought, the poet says, in the very first *Pur* (canto):

> The Lord of the universe has abandoned Mathura and Gokul,
> He is no more at Jamuna;
> Engage thyself in the city of service,
> And enquire the whereabouts of the Lord of the flute.
>
> (tr. H.I.S.)

He was an optimist, and his mission in life was 'to turn a sorrow-stricken world into pure delight, and make it fertile and prosperous'.

His great service to Sindhi poetry was that he inspired and guided a band of young poets to complete the revolution he had brought about. Hundraj 'Dukhāyal' (b. 1910), Hari 'Dilgīr' (b. 1916), Prabhu 'Vafā' (b. 1915) and Ram Punjwani (b. 1911) are among his noted followers.

Dayaram Gidumal (Dayārām Gidūmal, 1857–1927), a Judge of the Bombay High Court, who called himself 'Nimāṇo' (Humble), Zero, Sigma, etc. and was mostly concerned with metaphysical studies of both eastern and western classics, came out with 5 massive volumes of *Mana Ja Cābūka* (Scourges of the Mind), written in free verse on a wide variety of subjects. It is a synthesis of Sufism, the Vedanta and the Teachings of Guru Nanak, and is 'one of the first poetic works in free verse in Sindhi'. According to L. H. Ajwani, 'the book is likely to be considered as one of the epoch-making works in the Sindhi language'. (*History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 161). It is, however, a pity that the poet had no impact on either his contemporaries or on those who succeeded him.

Contemporary Sindhi poetry was also enriched with translations, the chief among them being N. V. Thadhani's *Bhagvad Gītā* (1923) on Persian prosodic model. Also it was the first experiment in blank verse in Sindhi. Not that the world famous book was not translated in Sindhi verse earlier—Mulchand Lala, Menghraj Kalvani, Chainram Bulchand and others had already translated it, but

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'Thadhani's translation was different, and it gave some idea of the sublimity and loftiness of the original to those who knew not Sanskrit' (L. H. Ajwani, *History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 163).

T. L. Vaswani's (1879–1967) translation in free verse of the same book, however, found a larger audience because of his use of simpler language. Mangharam Malkani (Manghārām Malkāṇī, 1896–1980) rendered Tagore's *The Gardener* (*Prīt Jā Gīta*) and *Gītāñjali* in free verse, in 1940 and 1941 respectively. Indeed, these translations of Tagore's poems have captured the original charm to a certain extent.

Devan Kishnani 'Azad' (Ḍevan Kiṣnāṇī 'Āzād', b. 1913) made an adaptation of Arnold's *Light of Asia* under the title *Pūrab Sandeś* (Message of the Orient, 1937). It is a popular and enjoyable narrative poem in six-line stanzas, dealing with the life of Lord Buddha.

Freedom Movement. The Freedom Movement came to Sind soon after the declaration of the partition of Bengal by Lord Curzon. The veteran Sindhi scholar Lalchand Amardinomal (1885–1954) formed Vande Mataram Mandli and many journals, especially *Mātā* under the editorship of Tolaram Balani, and *Hindvāsī* (later on *Bhāratvāsī*) *Weekly* with another great Sindhi writer Jethmal Parsram as its editor, published articles against imperialism and British oppression. To make the movement a real success, great emphasis was laid on the participation of the peasant and the worker.

The first poem (1905) produced during the struggle period was on Swadeshi, by the above-mentioned Lalchand. To quote him:

Though food is in abundance, the prices are high,
Consequently the bellies are shrunk to the backs;
The goods are shipped to foreign lands,
And the public is groaning under heavy taxes.
God above, let us take a solemn vow:
'Hereafter we shall use only *Desi* goods'.
The motherland shall then become prosperous
And the honour of the poor will be preserved.

(tr. H.I.S.)

Such poems were generally sung in processions and public meetings. Foreign goods were boycotted, collected and burnt.

The Swadeshi movement developed into anti-imperialism on the one hand, and love for the country and its leaders on the other. Such poems often found publication in bulletins and pamphlets which were soon proscribed. The processionists, while proceeding towards Azad maidan to hear the leaders and/or to court arrest, would loudly sing:

Let us march towards the jail,
Let us rush to the jail;
Gandhi is along with us,
Let us march towards the jail.
Nehru is one with us
Let us march towards the jail.

(tr. H.I.S.)

Be ready, O lover of the motherland! for the scaffold;
Get up, and wear martyrdom's garland around your neck.

(Aziz, tr. H.I.S.)

May my dead body be carried in Free India,
May I not die in the land of the slaves.

(Dukhayal, tr. H.I.S.)

Communal disharmony was the main hurdle in the achievement of freedom. To overcome this, many poets made it the subject of their writings. Kishinchand 'Bewas' was among those poets who came under the influence of Gandhiji. He was the first to introduce Gandhian thought in Sindhi poetry. In one of his oft-quoted poems he says:

Intellect, freedom, dignity, prosperity and respect
Shall step in only where there is real love of one's land;
Those mothers may well smile who to infants in cradle sing:
Highest dedication in life consists in service of the nation.

(tr. H.I.S.)

He composed a number of poems on such themes and ideals as the swadeshi, sacrifice, non-cooperation, non-violence, charkha, live and let live, and so on. As early as 1935, two of his poems *Qomiyat* (Nationalism) and *Insān* (Human Being) were rendered into Hindi, and published in *Hans* by Munshi Premchand.

The most prolific writer of national songs was, however, Hundraj Dukhayal (Hundrāj Dukhāyal, b. 1910) whose sweet singing further infused the spirit of national awakening in the minds of the Sindhis. His *Sangīt Phūl* (1946), divided into 15 sections, devotes the last and the largest section to the songs of Freedom. Section VII, entitled *Umar Mārūi*, is also 'a rare blend of patriotic feeling and poetic sentiments'. *Vaṇ Ain Kuhāro* (Tree and the Axe) is his best and most effective poem, illustrating the evil effect of disunity. Next to Dukhayal was Chetan Dev 'Yamraj'.

Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi (1901–70) is yet another illustrious poet of this period. When he was a student of the D. J. Sindhi College, Karachi (in the twenties), he wrote *Darya Ṣāh* (Apostrophe to the River Sindhu) which in its high flights of imagination stands unrivalled to this day. He published *Tuhfa-e-Sind* (Gift of Sind, 1930) in which his satirical poem 'Ṣikva' (Complaint to God), after the style of the Urdu poet Muhammad Iqbal, offended the Mullas who got the book banned. Thereafter Jatoi leaped into the political

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fray, and became the rallying point for the peasantry. His *Āzādī-e-Qom* (Song of Freedom, 1946) shows that he was a revolutionary in politics as well as in literature. This is perhaps the first book in Sindhi poetry in which the socialist viewpoint has been presented.

Among the young was the fire-brand Shaikh Ayaz (Ṣaikh Ayāz, b. 1926) whose *Bāghī* (Rebel, 1945) spread like fire. Look at the flood of emotion contained in:

Planting the flag of Freedom,
Welcome all misery:
Heads will fall and the blood flow—
How does it matter?
If a thousand houses are erased,
How does it matter?—
We have to build up Bharat,
O soul of new awakening! arise—
O warrior! O nation's soldier!
Lead on the masses.
O revolutionary! O rebel!
O leader of revolt in Bharat!

(tr. H.I.S.)

Traditional Emphasis

In keeping with the traditional norms, during the second quarter of the 20th century, a number of societies in Karachi, Hyderabad and Larkana organized *muṣairas* in which many Muslim and Hindu poets participated, most prominent among them being Fath Muhammad Sehwani, Sobhraj 'Fani' (1883–1956), Murad Ali 'Kazim' (1901–54)' Nizami (1895–1950, Karachi), Muhammad Bakhsh 'Vasif, (1892–1954), Muhammad Siddiq 'Musāfir' (1879–1961), Ibrahim 'Khalīl' (b. 1900), Hayat Shah 'Hāfiz' (1877–1955) (Punjabi by birth), Lekhraj 'Azīz' (1891–1971), Parsram 'Ranjoor' (later on 'Zia', ?–1958), Muhammad 'Ghani', Sadarangani 'Khādim' (b. 1913, Hyderabad), Nawaz Ali 'Niyāz' (1892–1959), Haji Mahmood 'Khādim' (1895–1960), Qadiri, Lutfullah 'Jogi' (later on 'Lutf', 1904–68) and Hari 'Dilgīr' (b. 1916, Larkana and Shikarpur).

Of these, Vasif was a great scholar of Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He has left behind a *Dīvān*, replete with Persian type similes and metaphors, and *Rubāiyāt-e-Vāṣif* which, in all probability, is the first book of original quatrains in Sindhi. Other authors of *Dīvān* were Hafiz, Najafy (1860–1942), Ahsan (b. 1900) and Qadiri. Lekhraj 'Aziz' an eminent scholar of Sindhi and Persian (and the 'King of Ghazal' as he later on came to be called) published his *Kulliyāt* in two volumes (1938), the first containing mainly *ghazals*, and the other two *mathnavīs*. His mastery of technique and command of his mother tongue, led to his successful use of all the forms and metres. In his poetry one comes across a great variety of topics. Nawaz Ali 'Niyāz' distinguished himself in the use of similes, both Persian and local. *Gul-a-Ain Bulbul Mein Jhagro* (Quarrel between the Rose and the Nightingale) is considered his masterpiece.

In his forties, Ghulam Ali 'Masrūr' (1853–93) brought out *Mussaddas-e-Masrūr* alias *Hīran Jo Hār*. According to the learned writer of *History of Sindhi Literature*, it is 'the most pleasing, elegant and unexceptionable book of poems by a Muslim, in the Persian metrical fashion....He employs the terminology of the Sufis...(and) without being pointedly didactic, teaches moral truths welcome to Hindus as well as Muslims.'

Muhammad Hashim 'Mukhlis' (1860–1934) son of Hafiz 'Hāmid' was a well-known journalist of Mirpurkhas. He was quite witty, and was perhaps the best satirist of his time, though he did not mind revelling in abuses. He was also the author of a *dīvān*.

'Progressive' Thought

It is necessary to point out here that the Progressive Movement in Urdu, of which the germs were planted at the All India Progressive Writers' Conference at Lucknow in the mid-thirties, travelled to Sind through books and periodicals. During the 'Quit India Movement', a number of Young Sindhi writers courted arrest and, in jails came in close contacts with the communists from various parts of India, who passed on their Leftist philosophy contained mainly in the writings of Maxim Gorky, Pushkin, Mayokovsky, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Andre Malraux and others. Munshi Prem Chand in prose, and poets like Josh Malihabadi, Majaz (Urdu poets), Nazrul Islam (Bengali poet), etc. now had a direct impact on Sindhi literature. Inspired by this, Sindhi progressive writers started a progressive monthly entitled *Naīn Duniya* (Karachi, 1945). Ayaz and Hyder Bakhsh Jatoi were the main contributors among the progressive poets, and they inspired many youngsters including Sugan Āhuja and Arjan 'Ṣād' (b. 1924).

Poetry had not yet become a deep-rooted form of expression *vis-a-vis* progressive literature, when the unfortunate division of the subcontinent on communal lines took place in 1947. This bifurcation was bound to result in a split in literature too. Hindu poets and writers began their mass exodus to India, and this resulted in a sharp set-back to the growth of Sindhi literature on the whole.

In the Wake of Partition

The partition was a severe blow to the hopes and aspirations of the Hindu Sindhis. Instead of gaining freedom, they lost all that they had and, after crossing the carved borders were scattered over different parts of the country. For the first few years their immediate problem was to rehabilitate themselves. Although Sindhis were the worst sufferers of partition, their age-old tradition of Sufistic thought and

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behaviour, which had moulded their life in Sind, kept them from fanning communal feelings. Thus, while the reflection of events attendant on their uprootal—discontent, frustration, despair, etc. is fairly abundant in Sindhi poetry produced at that time (and touches the depths of one's heart)—overtones of bitterness and hatred are almost absent. The period is characterized by a sense of nostalgia for the homeland (Sind and *Sindhiyat*) and by the ordeal of everyday life in uncongenial surroundings. Parsram Zia introduced an element of humour and satire in his poems, which were published mostly in the daily *Hindustān* and its sister weekly *Hindvāsī*. At the same time, to console such souls who might have been upset by unprecedented adverse circumstances, he versified *Jap Sāhib, Sukhmanī* (Sikh religious books) and the *Gītā*.

New Consciousness. There were many who had brought with them ideological affinities to the progressive writers in this land. Their urge for creativity, emerged with new passion. They wrote about the new realities of life. Some of them, like Sugan Ahuja, Ishwar 'Anchal' (b. 1928), Arjan 'Shad', Goverdhan Bharati (b. 1929), Moti Prakash (b. 1931) and Krishin 'Rahi' (b. 1932) brought a vehemence so great that at one stage poetry became domineering, and prose faded as if into oblivion. This trend reached its full bloom in the late fifties. Sugan's *Andherī Nagrī-a jo chowpat Rājā* (Lawless or Chaotic Country with a Worthless King), Shad's *Modi-a jo Bill* (Grocer's Bill), Anchal's *Pyār Ain Paiso* (Love and Money), Rahi's *Ārām Harām Āhe* (Rest is Unlawful) were some of the most popular poems of the time.

Progessive Thought in Romantic Poetry. Some radicals, however, did not agree with the progressives, and they protested against the established norms. Even some of these who had been led away by the current of progressivism, started realizing that we also exist as individuals. Thus, they came out with a new formula of coexistence, i.e. giving vent to progressive thought in romantic poetry like the *ghazal*. Narayan 'Shyam' (b. 1922), Sugan Ahuja, Anchal and Moti Prakash were its best exponents. They inspired a new group of young *ghazal*-wirters like Arjan 'Hāsid' (b. 1930), Laxman 'Komal' (b. 1936), Vasdev 'Nirmal' (b. 1936) and M. Kamal (b. 1925). At this stage *ghazal* in Sindhi touched the top of its popularity and every new poet started expressing himself through its medium. So much so that not only representative collections of *ghazal* were brought out, but even exclusive collections under the title *Ghazal*, were published. It is interesting to note here that in most of the global literatures, progressivism has always followed romanticism, but in the case of Sindhi literature romanticism followed progressive thinking.

New Poetry and Its Impact

The above trend dominated Sindhi poetry for over a decade—up to the late sixties. Side by side, a new wave emerged in the early sixties with a new form (*Āzād Nazm*) and content. The poets made attempts to break all norms, by arguing that life itself was completely broken and 'we are condemned to live'. This was a borrowed philosophy emerging, as it did, from the sufferings as well as repercussions of the Second World War. The most forceful thinkers who had their impact on Sindhi modern writers were Camus, Kafka, Sartre, Hemingway, Yeats, T. S. Eliot, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Ezra Pound, Cummings, Beckett and Brecht. Sindhi writers could read them only in English or Hindi translations. It is difficult to say who influenced whom, to what extent and in what way. Quite a few could not catch the subtle spirit of their approach but caught only the glimpses. For example Camus in his philosophy laid more stress on living in spite of its tortures and turmoils, but some Sindhi writers mistook it for a philosophy of doing away with oneself.

The new poetry carried tension, vulgarity, violent imagery, and verbal jugglery, etc. The images were incoherent, similes and metaphors jumbled up, expression weak and full of ambiguity and diction rough and often prosaic. The section of poets who emerged were Harish Vasvani (b. 1940), Mohan Kalpana (b. 1930), Vasdev Mohi (b. 1944), Shyam Jaisinghani (b. 1937), Brajmohan (b. 1939), Motilal Jotwani (b. 1936) and Anand Khemani. They did not accept any set principles of poetry. Some of them played with words and wrote anything under the name of poetry. Since it was free expression, and no knowledge was required for such sort of poetry, everybody attempted it—considering it a thing of easy virtue.

As a natural corollary, the most favoured topics were man's alienation from the social milieu and the absurdity of human existence. Any aspect of life, capable of leaving a great impact or shock—contraceptives, abortion, male prostitution, vultures feasting on human flesh, venal politicking, etc.—suited the poet's pen. He wrote subjectively, interpreting old symbols in the context of the present. Similarly, characters from the classics were deprived of their erstwhile exalted status, with a view to destroying established loyalties. To quote an instance,

The world
Demands from me all the time,
The world
Repeatedly tells me:
Take money and lend your heart.
But my heart is not for sale in an auction;
Nor has it five Pandu mates.
My heart is my own beloved,
A chaste woman.
But who can explain to this realm of Kurus
That I am no Yudhishtira
Who will stake his Draupadi for a throw of dice!

(Harish, tr. H.I.S.)

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Here is a cynical dithyramb on sex. The title of the poem in translation is 'Half an Hour's Beloveds'.

Whose loveliness
Is violated by common snakes
Whose dreams
Lose their silken texture
In the process of washing
And get torn like a piece of ordinary cloth.
God smiled
The smile threw ajar the gates of Hell
Thus a prostitute was born!
In Calcutta, in Rome, in Baghdad,
In London, in Paris, in....
They are *Mūmals*, the beloveds of all,
But have no paramour,—
Their nights and youthfulness are trampled
Their dreams expire while awake
And their thoughts are turned into faggots.
They are *Satīs* of avarice
Wives for an evening
The beloveds of half an hour
Gopīs of the Mathura of passion
Poison-imbibing *Nīlkaṇṭīs*
Kind and modest
They pray to God in the night
But He simply sees!
Oh, He is narrow-minded, hard-hearted, fallen.
(*Kalpana*, tr. H.I.S.)

The following poem by the founder of *Naī Kavitā* describes life's stagnation:

A bullock-cart
Trudges along like old custom and tradition
So do the oxen trudge along mechanically!
The heavy load resembles sorrow.
Athwart this incubus of pain
The driver, tired and worn,
Has spread himself comfortably
Indeed
And the cold night is weaving
A coffin of moon beams!
(*Goverdhan*, tr. H.I.S.)

New poetry had many bye-products like free verse and anti-poetry (*Akavitā*). Anand Khemani is the representative of the latter.

The impact of new poetry, which is individualistic and shows flashes of any happening or moment, was so great that even some of the old votaries started knocking at its door. They were fully conscious of its timely impact, but they were at the same time not time-servers as many other so-called new poets turned out to be. Their's was an expression of real feelings.

Other New Forms of Expression. So far as new forms are concerned, Hari 'Dilgir' introduced *tarāīl* (triolet), and Narayan 'Shyam' transplanted *haiku* and also brought in *tappā* from Punjab. Inder Bhojwani experimented with *tanhā* (one-line poem). *Pañjkaṛā* (five-line poem), which in the past was composed in irregular metres and in *madaḥ* (invocation) form, was given a definite shape by Prabhu 'Vafa'. Tulsidas Tulreja rendered most of *Rāma Carit Mānas* in the original *choupāī*. Metres peculiar to *rubāī* were generously employed in all kinds of poems. Narayan 'Shyam' composed the story of Vishvamitra in sonnets.

The reaction to new poetry is not quite uniform, which perhaps makes the following poem *Naī Kavitā* (New Poetry) remark ironically:

New poetry
Not one poem
Five six fragments
Of one whole sentence
(Rendered with eyes closed)
A few new words
(Not to be found in any dictionary).
Purpose?
None need understand
(Not even the poet.) (Lachhman Hardwani, tr. H.I.S.)

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the new wave has liberated the minds of Sindhi poets from the chains of centuries-old forms, figures of speech, stock vocabulary and repeated thoughts; and has opened the path of uninhibited and free expression. It is, however, a pity that in this age of expanding horizons, and after more than 30 years of Independence, quite a considerable number of our modern poets should continue to give vent to feelings of disillusionment and dejection, almost verging on frustration leading to nihilism. One can understand the subjective despair of a poet, provided it is born of real experience. In their exuberance to produce something 'different' they simply ape the West and write all that has no relevance to this country and its people.

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Tamil

S. ABDUL RAHMAN

Dawn of a New Era

The beginning of the 20th century saw modernism entering Tamil poetry. Subramanya Bharati (Cupramaṇiya Pārati, 1882–1921) spearheaded its arrival. Most poets before Bharati closed their eyes to contemporary life. Least bothered with the social milieu, they cast stereotyped toys in the grammatical mould merely to exhibit their linguistic talents. The fire was not completely extinguished; but it lay under the ashes waiting for someone to kindle it. Bharati was the poet who scattered the ashes and rekindled the flame.

Among the few who kept the poetic fire alive before Bharati was the saint poet Ramalinga Adihal (Rāmaliṅka Aḍikaḷ, 1823–74), who released poetry from the hold of the highbrows and, with his simple diction, made philosophic ideas comprehensible even to the common folk. Then there was Gopalakrishna Bharati (Kōpālakṛṣṇa Pārati, 19th century) whose *Kīrtanai* (a specific type of musical composition that uses colloquial phrases) attracted common people and made them feel his poetry their own. There was Vedanayagam Pillai (Vētanāyakam Piḷḷai, 1824–89), the first novelist in Tamil, who brought new content to Tamil poetry with his social satire written in contemporary idiom. And Sundaram Pillai (Cuntaram Piḷḷai, 1855–97) influenced by Shakespeare's plays and Sanskrit drama wrote the first poetic drama in which he sowed the seeds of Tamil nationalism.

Subramanya Bharati

Tamil heard a new voice in Bharati. He not only revived Tamil poetry but infused it with new vigour and virtue. His works mark a new departure in Tamil literature. By being receptive to alien influences and by absorbing them into his writing, he broke the traditional insularity of Tamil. He brought about revolutionary changes both in form and content. While the neo-classicists of his time wished to resurrect the past, Bharati sought to create a new world. He proudly declared that his poetry was 'new poetry glowing with new taste, new content, new beauty and new diction, which will never die'.

The most important characteristic of Bharati, which differentiated him from the other poets of his time, was his intention to address himself to the common man. His message was meant for him; he sang of the people, for the people. He adapted simplicity both in diction and in form and considered this the 'resurrecting breath for Tamil'. Though he eulogized the great poets of the past, he drew inspiration mostly from his immediate predecessors, such as Gopalakrishna Bharati, who were not 'great' poets but were popular with the common people. He preferred varieties of the *sindhu* (cintu), a musical metre developed from the folk-songs, to the traditional metres. The special genius of Bharati lay in the unerring instinct with which he seized upon the scattered folk-songs of Tamilnadu, and through them preached love of the mother tongue, patriotism and courage to fight for freedom.

Bharati for the first time made patriotism and nationalism the content of Tamil poetry. In the introduction he wrote in 1909 to the first collection of his national songs, he compares patriotism to a new dawn which stirs new life and alacrity in everything. He calls it a new religion and feels proud of being a faithful follower of that religion. Bharati glorified Tamil land and the Tamil language with the same vigour and patriotic fervour as he did India. Though his love of Tamil made him declare that he found no other language as sweet as Tamil, it did not make him a chauvinist. For him the love of the mother tongue was an integral part of nationalism. Though the Indian scene presented diversity, he saw the cultural threads which united and held together the diverse elements, thus:

Thirty crore faces she has,
But life only one
Eighteen glorious tongues she has,
But thought only one. (tr.)

The patriotic poems of Bharati express in eloquent terms the imperative need for national unity in a period of stress and strain:

Whatever be our destiny
Let us share it equally
Let us thirty crores
Live collectively or
Fall collectively. (tr.)

He realized that the first step to national liberty was national unity, and he therefore urged his countrymen to sink differences based on caste and community and present a united front to the common enemy. He believed that political liberty would bring social liberty that would enable those suppressed and exploited by social and economic causes to be uplifted. With a religious reverence he deified

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Liberty. *Vandē Mātaram* was, to him, the supreme *mantra*. (He has also translated into Tamil Bankim Chandra's popular song *Vandē Mātaram*.)

A born rebel who openly revolted against unreasonable conventions and unjust social laws, Bharati seized upon the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity and tirelessly preached them to build a free society. His humanism, transcending class and national barriers, made him hail the Russian Revolution and sympathize with Belgium in the opening days of the First World War.

Bharati was a passionate upholder of the rights of women and denounced the domestic tyranny of men. His 'New Woman' stands for wisdom, truth, heroism and freedom. His profound belief in the *Śakti* cult inspired him to regard woman as an *avatār* (incarnation) of *Parāśakti* born into this world to reform it and make men immortal. The same belief made him think that it was the goddess *Parāśakti* who destroyed the Russian tyrant and rescued the lovers of truth from his cruel hands. He extended his concept of freedom not only to men and women, but also to animals. He strongly believed in the unity of the human race. His conception of what he calls the *Kṛta Yuga*, or the new era, is an age of freedom, equality, dharma, piety, truth and love.

Bharati's interest in the sacred scriptures, stimulated by his intimate contact with Sri Aurobindo, influenced his concepts of liberty. Most of Bharati's views on human life may be traced partly to Vedic literature and partly to the European thinkers of the 18th century. He gives a metaphysical interpretation to the concept of liberty. To him it is a state of freedom from all fears, a state of supreme happiness and complete surrender to God. His concept of spiritual equality embraces all the animate and the inanimate:

> The crow and the sparrow are of our race
> The ocean and the mountains our clan. (tr.)

He was a Vedantin steeped in Hindu mystic thought. He translated into Tamil the *Samādhi Pādam* of *Patañjali Yōgasūtra* as well as Rigvedic hymns, adding his comments to both.

Pāñcāli Capatam (Vow of Draupati, 1912), one of Bharati's three great poems, set a new trend in the reinterpretation of ancient stories. His Pancali is not merely the Draupati of Mahabharata, but is an allegorical character used to explain the afflictions of captive India and to call for an awakening. His other two great poems, *Kuyil Pāṭṭu* (Song of the Cuckoo, 1912) and *Kaṇṇan Pāṭṭu* (Song on Krishna, 1917) record the infinite longing of the poet's soul to unite with the Essence. In *Kuyil Pāṭṭu*, the poet, unable to bear the fitful fever of life, flies on the wings of poesy and seeks temporary refuge in the golden realms of imagination. The allegorical poem shows the poet's aspirations towards sublime beauty and love.

Although Bharati trod the traditional path of the Alvars and the Nayanars, the divine poets of Vaishnavism and Saivism, in singing of God as his close kith and kin, his revolutionary mind inspired him to take a new turn by thinking of God as a servant and a beloved also.

Bharati was the first to attempt the prose-poem (*vacana kavitai*) in Tamil. He was, of course, influenced by Tagore, Walt Whitman and the Vedic scriptures. The thought-content is mostly made up of the mystic approach of the Vedic Rishis to the powerful forces of nature. The rare combination of Vedic and scientific knowledge in Bharati enabled him to produce new nature-myths, such as:

> The Mars, the Mercury and the other girls
> Move in orbit around the Sun.
> They love their father.
> Under his magic control
> They revolve within their limits. (tr.)

Bharati's sensuous epithets such as 'golden voice', his paradoxical epithets such as 'fire-taste', the transferred epithets like 'flowers which smell fire', the metaphysical images such as 'Thou (moon light) ocean! originating from a white island' and his powerful expressions, 'Let our song possess lightning; Let our word flash like lightning' were all new to Tamil poetry.

Bharati's poetry and prose mingled and created a sacred confluence of the two streams of world culture, the intellectualism of the West and the spiritualism of the East, altogether changing the texture of Tamil poetry. He is one of the more significant voices of the Indian Renaissance and the father-figure of the modern Tamil movement, the herald of the dawn of a new era.

The Tamil Reawakening—Bharatidasan

If the awakening of nationalism produced Bharati, it is the reawakening of the Tamil race which moulded Bharatidasan (Pāratitācan, 1891–1962), a disciple of Bharati, as may be seen from his *nom de plume* itself. But though he began as an admiring student of Bharati, he deviated from this path and ended as a racial prophet. Bharati stood for social reform, but he touched few fields; it was left to his disciple, Bharatidasan, an impatient, rather impetuous spirit, to be the torch-bearer of a vigorous reformist movement.

The second significant change in Bharatidasan occurred when he came under the great influence of Periyar E. V. Ramasamy (Periyār E. V. Rāmacāmi) who started the Self-Respect Movement in 1926 to safeguard the rights of non-Brahmins and to spread rational ideas. Bharatidasan became an outstanding exponent of the movement.

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Bharatidasan lived in the age of the great reawakening of the Tamil peoples. A number of poems record his response to the surging emotions of the times. Political events of his time diverted his poems into agitational and revolutionary channels. His poetry erupted like a volcano and his words flowed like molten lava with almost unbearable heat and force. Such words as these still burn:

The ones which play in dreadful death
are our victorious arms,
The one which pours out ideas as Ganga and Kaveri
is our heart
The Tamil which smells hot blood and does heroic deeds
is our breath! (tr.)

Up to the end of his life he was inclined to slide into political declamation, sometimes even to the extent of making personal attacks.

Bharatidasan strongly believed that Aryan infiltration was the main cause for the downfall of the Tamil race. He abhorred everything connected with Aryanism and hence attacked Puranas, *Ithihāsas* and religious superstitions all of which he felt were inimical to the unity of Indians. In one of his famous poems, *Cañjīvi Paṛvatattin Sāral* (Valley of the Sanjivi Mountain, 1930), an Englishman consoles his brethren saying:

There are great Puranas to germinate divisions,
Itihāsas to spread caste quarrels,
And numerous highfalutin priests earning their bread
by blinding the society.
Good human beings have become stones
and stones are made gods there.
In this situation is there any chance
for the freedom fight?
Is it possible to find out a good policy
in such turmoil?
Oh, my brethren! do not fear,
India will never slip out of our hands,
If the people living there are thirty crores
the divisions among them are also of the same number.
(tr.)

Atheism was, for the first time, introduced in Tamil poetry by Bharatidasan. He believed that social and economic disparities were nourished in the name of God. He says in one poem:

Who will help improve the lot for the betterment of the
bleachers, (dhobis)
God or their donkeys?
.....
Let us burst all the bonds of the workers
and set them on the mean.
Who have said it is the divine order
that the comrades who till the soil
are to receive a meagre wage
and the idle rich are to rule
and enjoy the world? (tr.)

Bharatidasan urged the establishment of a world order in which there would be neither religion nor castg, neither quarrel nor division among the people:

It is our duty to build a life
Sans religion, *sans* caste, *sans* state. (tr.)

Two ideas dominate all Bharatidasan's work, narrative and lyric alike, his ardent love of Tamil and his wholehearted belief in reform being the prime factor in all human progress. He repeats himself on these two counts over and over again, displaying vehement passion for his cherished ideals. His ideas pursue him everywhere.

Tamil has never had such an ardent admirer as Bharatidasan. His lines like:

Even the pleasure given by a damsel
cannot be compared to our great Tamil (tr.)

have become more or less proverbial. It is Bharatidasan's mission as a 'culture poet' to preserve the best of Tamil culture. His heroes and heroines would sacrifice even their love for the sake of Tamil. The hero and heroine of his love-poem *Etirpārāta Muttam* (Unexpected Kiss, 1941) die not for love but for Tamil culture. The Pure Tamil Movement propagated by Maraimalai Adikal (Maṛaimalai Aṭikaḷ) and Pavanar (Pāvāṇar) found a powerful spokesman in Bharatidasan. The love of Tamil nationalism made him claim Ravana as his great ancestor. Bharatidasan's forceful songs, written during the anti-Hindi agitation that shook Tamilnadu, contained such burning words as:

If the mother tongue gets hurt
We will serve our fresh blood,

*

The prison where they plan to keep us locked up
Is a flower garden where sings the cuckoo. (tr.)

Such lines inspired the Tamil people and were emotionally quoted by them.

Bharatidasan's popularity lay in the fact that he was not merely a poet but a social reformer who used poetry as a platform for his social appeals. He is rightly called the 'Revolutionary Poet' by the Tamil people. He tore age-old beliefs to shreds. His poems breathe equality between men and women, they proclaim revolt against the citadels of orthodoxy, they uphold the rights of the downtrodden

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and expose the dehumanization of religion. He pleads in his poetry for the removal of all such social disabilities as child-marriage, forced widowhood, slavery, etc. When he speaks in support of widow-marriage, he is a crusader whose questions are darts flung at society:

Even an old man, if his wife dies,
asks for a girl to make love
Is it wrong if a young girl who is like a fresh flower
Marries again when her husband dies?
Have you seen bees which cannot sing?
Breeze which cannot wander?
Stomachs which cannot feel hunger? (tr.)

Bharatidasan was anxious to fight not only social injustice born of religious obscurantism but also economic inequities. He was greatly influenced by Communist ideology; no Tamil poet has sung so much about a socialistic society as Bharatidasan has. There are echoes of Shelley's 'Ye are many; they are few', in Bharatidasan's words to the workers:

If you count the number of the working lot
In village, country and the world,
They are like the ocean full of water
Boats are the rich who float upon it. (tr.)

His profound sympathy for the downtrodden inspired him to glorify the country man, the cart-driver, the shepherd, the weaver, the woodcutter, etc. These are the heroes and heroines of his love-songs. They are the people he often addresses as Chera and Pandya, the great emperors of Tamil history. He strongly felt that socialism was inevitable:

The world moves towards the goal
Where all is for all. (tr.)

As much as he sought to create a new socialistic world, Bharatidasan was inspired by other aspects of life as well. He expresses his love of nature; not with meditative musing, but with a very live sense of wonder and delight at the energizing glories of nature. But even here he sees the world of his dreams. To him, the cloud is the smoke coming from a slave's burning heart; the stars are blisters that appear in the sky when it is angered by the injustice done to the labourers; the joy of seeing the full moon is the joy of hungry workers seeing a potful of cooked rice. He uses the theme of love to arouse the feelings of the people against social evils. Most of his love-poems are sugar-coated pills containing his reformatory medicine.

Bharatidasan loved domestic felicity very much and he preached it, particularly in his *Kuṭumba Viḷakku* (Lamp of the Family, 1950). According to him, 'a good family is a university'. The heroine of his *Kuṭumba Viḷakku* is a teacher to her children, minister to her husband, a cook, a singer, a painter, a nurse, a tailor, a helper in her husband's business and a partner in his public life. One cannot but wonder at Bharatidasan's talent which lifts simple unpoetic material such as the day-to-day domestic duties of a housewife to sublime heights of literature in this unique epic. Here there is a calm and quiet flow of all his ideals, not the wild flood of his other works.

Bharatidasan, a mutinous child of the Muse, exercised a vital influence on the language as well as on his contemporaries. There is no other poet in the past who has affected Tamilnadu as powerfully as he. Yet his detractors are many, and there are not a few critics who would deny him a place in the firmament of great poets.

The Romantic Age

The impact of Bharati and Bharatidasan on Modern Tamil poetry was so great that most poets who followed them became satellites of one or the other. Poets who were inspired by Bharati included Desika Vinayakam Pillai (Tēcika Vināyakam Piḷḷai, 1876–1952), Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai (Nāmakkal Irāmaliṅkam Piḷḷai, 1888–1972) and Suddhananda Bharati (Cuttānanta Pārati, b. 1897). They accepted the dual nationalism and Hindu Indian culture. The followers of Bharatidasan, such as Suradha (Curatā, b. 1921), Vanidasan (Vāṇitācan, 1915–77) and Mudiarasan (Mutiaracan, b. 1920), opposed this dual nationalism and stood for Tamil nationalism alone. Anti-Aryanism, opposition to Hindi, love for Tamil and social reforms were their main themes.

The poetry of this period possessed most of the aspects of Romanticism, first introduced by Bharati. But this Romanticism was not imported from Europe; some of its elements such as the cult of ideal womanhood, of nature and of childhood, were already present in the native literary tradition. These concepts, the socio-political conditions of the time and the influence of the West combined to evolve Tamil Romanticism. A secular romantic literature emerged and kindled the spirit of humanism, equality, liberty and fraternity. It encouraged the revolt against the evils of casteism and religious conservatism, glorified the proletariat and celebrated scientific achievement. The literature was fascinated by folk-tunes, it experimented with new forms and reinterpreted ancient myths and themes to suit its authors' ends. Translations and adaptations of European poets played an important role in introducing the trends of western literature.

Desika Vinayakam Pillai, who was called 'Kavimani' (Gem of the Poets) by his admirers, was a confirmed traditionalist. He set a new trend by devoting most of his poetry to children. This inspired poets like Ala. Valliappa (Alā Vaḷḷiappa, b. 1922) who produced remarkable children's

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poetry in Tamil. Kavimani is more popular for his translations and adaptations from western languages than for his original works. He rendered into Tamil, Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* and Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. His Omar Khayyam reads Kamban's poetry and drinks nectar, not wine; and Omar's beloved sings devotional songs together with him. Kavimani's *Nāñcil Nāṭṭu Marumakkaḷvaḷi Mānmiyam* narrates the sufferings of a fifth wife of a *Kāraṇavar* (eldest male member) due to the *Marumakkattāyam* (matrilineal system), which involves inheritance and succession through the sister's children in the female line. The Juvenalian satire and subtle but grim humour make the poem unique in Tamil literature. This poet played a major role in bringing about the Nanjanad Vellala Marumakkattayam Act in 1926, which made the desired changes in the system.

Rajaji once opined that the seed sown by Tilak yielded Bharati and the seed sown by Gandhi produced Namakkal Kavijnar. Namakkal Ramalingam Pillai devoted all his poems to the National Movement and earnestly propagated Gandhian philosophy. His song:

A war is coming without weapons without blood
Come and join
all who believe in the perpetuity of the Truth. (tr.)

was written at the time of the freedom sturuggle and immediately made him popular. It was used as a marching song by the volunteers who, led by Rajaji, marched to Vedaranyam as part of the salt satyagraha. He upheld age-old Indian culture and deified Liberty on the lines of Bharati. At a time when 'Hindi down' was a war cry, he felt that there was no harm in the Tamil people learning Hindi, yet he objected to singing Telugu and Sanskrit *kīrtanas* in Tamilnadu musical halls. He became a strong propagandist of the Tamil Music Movement and composed many *kīrtanas* in Tamil. He wrote a modern social epic, *Avanum Avaḷum* (He and She, 1944), which is more or less a novel in verse. In the name of simplicity he went to the extreme of lavishly using foreign terms and slang in his poems. His over-enthusiasm for modernity often makes him unpoetic. Yet he was the Poet Laureate of Madras Presidency and won a Padhmabhushan title.

Suddhananda Bharati occupies a unique place in modern Tamil poetry. His lineage is that of the ancient poets of India, yet he is one of the notable voices of the modern age. His literary productivity is amazingly large and varied. His dream is to vitalize the entire world through spiritualized Tamil culture. His poetry is the flowering of his spirituality. This modern Yogi pleads for the removal of all social disabilities and his oft-repeated call is to inaugurate a new era of freedom, unity, peace, modern culture and ancient spirituality along with the many-sided industrial development. His contribution in introducing western literature to Tamil is considerable. He has translated selected portions of Walt Whitman, Francis Thompson, William Blake, Dante and others. He recommends *Tantric sādhanā* to family men; he advocates the energy-culture which he describes in his *Yōga Siddhi*. He preaches spiritual socialism and expounds its basic principles as unity of God and unity of souls:

God unites, mental man divides;
And yet one religion he needs.
Awake Oh Soul! and see who hides
Behind the veils of castes and creeds! (tr.)

Pāratacakti Makākāviyam (The Might of Bharat, 1948), the *magnum opus* of Suddhananda Bharati, is a great epic about Superman. It is 15,000 stanzas long, a stupendous work that hovers between allegory and epic. The magnificent poem describes the battle between the Divine and the Demoniacal forces in the modern world and sings of the victory of the Divine. The poet paints a great picture on the canvas of modern history, showing India's supreme achievements in the past and its tireless travails today, and predicting the country's future.

Kambadasan (Kampatācan, 1916–69), a poet who deserves a great deal more notice than he has received, was a democrat, but not in the sense that Bharatidasan was one. The fever of Revolution did not burn in his veins; his radicalism was poetic, not political.

There is sleep for the eye's rest
Ghat for even the mean donkey's rest
Measure for the melody's rest
But is there a place of rest for our hunger? (tr.)

asks a beggar in one of his poems. His social consciousness runs like an undercurrent through his poems, the poetry overwhelming everything.

S.D.S. Yogi (Yōki, 1904–63) inherited a devotion to Sakti worship from Bharati. His work was inspired by a nostalgia for 'classicism'. He despised the oversimplicity of his coevals and adapted the grand style of Kamban, the great Tamil epic poet. His translation of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* (*Manitanaip-pātuvēn*, 1958) possesses all the vigour and vitality of the original. He was a poet who might well have gained greater recognition if he had lived in a different age.

Of all the followers of Bharatidasan, Suradha is the most interesting. 'It is not imagination but knowledge that helps in composing poetry', he believes. His genius, temperament and learning give to his poems certain qualities which immediately attract attention. He is much admired for his vivid similes and is rightly called the 'Poet of Similes'. Even the rules of grammar become similes in his poems:

My son has become the letter
Which does not come in front of the word. (tr.)

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Such poetic definitions of his as fragrance—the breath of the flower and dew—the sweat of the moon, and such arresting images as 'the coughing clouds', 'the advertising ocean', 'the sandalpaste night' have a freshness about them hitherto unknown in Tamil. His remarkable talent for facile versification turns everything into poetry, whether it is a bit of news or a speech made by a leader. Suradha mainly composes narrative poems in the style of Bharatidasan, selecting interesting episodes from Tamil history and ancient literature.

Kannadasan (Kaṇṇatācan, 1926–81), the famous film lyricist is, of course, the most popular of the followers of Bharatidasan. His sharp wit makes him an asset at public meetings and his sensitivity to the surging moods of the times give his verse the cachet of popularity. His limelight attitudinizing has made him an inconsistent ideologist. Thus, he started as a poet of the Dravidian Movement and became, in time, an enemy of it. Almost all the prominent political leaders have received their share of bouquets and brickbats from him. His incomplete *Kallakkudi Mākāviyam* (1960), a political epic, was something new to Tamil literature. He is fearless in his political poems, neo-classicist in his diction, emotional in his passion for Tamil, extravagant in his admiration of feminine beauty and uncontrollable in his attacks. Later in his life, he became philosophical and wrote devotional songs.

The influence of Gandhian thought was on the wane in the post-Independence period. Only a few poets, such as Kothamangalam Subbu (Kottamankalam Cuppu, 1910–74), Surabhi (Curapi, b. 1911) and S. D. Sundaram (Cuntaram, 1921–78), were inspired by it. The powerful appeal of the Dravidian Movement and the strong influence of Bharatidasan carried with them almost all the young poets of this period. Perunchitran, Ponnadiyan, Salai Ilanthiraiyan, Kovendan and Kuruvikkarambai Shanmugam—as well as those mentioned already—were part of this wave. But in course of time, the poets inspired by the Dravidian Movement dropped Tamil fanaticism and anti-Aryanism and turned to Humanism and Socialistic ideologies. Due to the spread of the renaissance spirit, conservatism, dogmatism and the narrow parochialism which existed in the Tamil neo-classical works have yielded place to cosmopolitanism, rationalism and a more universal outlook.

The Era of New Verse

The devastating transformation of sensibility associated with the modern age, the decay of the old moral and religious order, the decadence of the poets who came after Bharati and Bharatidasan, and the influence of western art and literature have together given birth to the New Verse (*Putukkavitai*) in Tamil. The emergence of this verse was not paroxysmal but gradual and natural.

Influenced by Walt Whitman and Bharati's prose-poems, Na. Pichamoorthy (Nā. Piccāmūrti, 1900–78) began to write prose-poems in the thirties. Though he deviated from the conventions, he did not make a complete break with tradition. Until the beginning of the forties he was fascinated with the rhythmic patterns of the traditional metres, but after the sixties he began to believe in 'poetry for the eye' rather than 'poetry for the ear'. Only his manner of expression, not the content, however, makes him a modernist. As a lover of beauty, he incites the mind to enjoy life:

> O, mind! senses are not bonds;
> But outlets of liberty.
> God has given them power—
> To know Him
> To make a plunge into the Primal Beauty;
> God has blossomed as flesh and blood. (tr.)

The old nature mysticism appeals powerfully through such sharp images as 'In the black cave of the darkness, Light the bull cries'. A thirsty craving for light echoes through all his writings. His works are not mechanical; they are flesh and blood, throbbing with life and emotion. Here is the voice of a mature intellect vibrating with the youth and innocence of a child crying for freedom from the shackles of this material world.

Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan (Rācakōpālan, 1902–44), a contemporary of Na. Pichamoorthy, differs from him in tone, diction and content. With romantic charm he admires and adores the mysterious beauty of Woman. His sensuous poems preach Epicureanism:

> Do not worry about
> the Maya and philosophy
> Come! Let us churn and enjoy
> the pleasure before us. (tr.)

Vallikkannan's (Vallikkaṇṇan, b. 1920) *Buddha Bal*[illegible] which was published in 1944, was the first collection of prose-poems. His realistic poems were influenced by Bhara[illegible] and Pichamoorthy. The writings of these three are con[illegible]dered the formative influences of the New Verse Movement. New Verse, whose most fertile period was in the forties, waned after Pichamoorthy, its life-giving spirit, lost in the rest.

Ka. Na. Subramanyam (Suppiramaṇiyam, b. 19[illegible]) revived the movement in the fifties. He is more a theorist than a poet, but he did write some experimental poems. He rediscovered Sangham poetry and found there the aspects of *vers libre*. He insisted upon the need for new verse to immortalize the poetic reality of the Modern Age in complicated word combinations suited to the times.

Eḷuttu, a literary periodical which was started early in 1959, played a major role in reviving and propagating the

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New Verse Movement by publishing articles in defence of it and introducing many new faces, some of whom have become major poets. It also brought out the first collection of new verses under the title *Putukkuralkaḷ* (New Voices) in 1962. Important poets introduced by the *Eḷuttu* have been Ti. So. Venugopalan, Sundara Ramaswamy, Darumu Sivaramu, T. K. Duraiswamy, C. Mani and S. Vaitheeswaran.

Venugopalan (b. 1929) expresses feelings of disappointment, despair and anger over the ignorance and disillusion in contemporary society. He ridicules society for its efforts to forget the present degeneration by boasting of ancient glories:

The mango kernel
Boasted of its lineage
I planted it and waited
Tree and fruits
have become shadows
Crawled there
A worm! (tr.)

Sundara Ramaswamy's (b. 1931) first poem *Un kai naham* (Your Finger Nail, 1959) possessed all the shock and obscurity, the idiosyncrasies of new verse.

Cut and throw away the nail
—it will collect dirt....
There is the whole world for dirt
Why then the nails also for it. (tr.)

A ball, a dog or an unmanned level-crossing—all become powerful symbols in his poetic quest for the inner meaning of life.

Darumu Sivaramu (b. 1939) is a brooding, meditative poet whose oft-quoted *Viṭivu* (The Dawn, 1961) shows him to be an Imagist:

Beauty spots
On the skin of the earth
Spreading semen of the sun
Blooming flower of
Fragrant rays
Worm
Eating the wings of the darkness
Sparrow
Floating with the wings of light. (tr.)

For Sivaramu image is not a technique but a language to express his visions. He is for ever looking behind the visible frame of things for the glories and wonders of the world of the spirit. The visionary in him often overpowers the artist. Some of his poems are impenetrably obscure because of his extraordinary visions. The force of his poetry is often derived from the refreshing connections he makes so spontaneously between widely removed objects in space, time and sense categories. A good example is his $E=Mc^2$.

T. K. Doraiswamy ('Nakulan') wrote several experimental poems. But obscurity blurs his work at times. C. Mani (b. 1936) is another experimentalist. He modelled his verse on the work of T. S. Eliot and E. E. Cummings. His long poem *Narakam* (Hell, 1962), in which he describes the despair and agony of a sex-starved adolescent tempted by the environment of a modern city, shows obvious technical resemblances to T. S. Eliot's poems, but he lacks Eliot's greater compression and sublimity. Nevertheless one is reminded of Eliot's 'evening which is spread out against the sky/Like a patient etherised on a table' when reading Mani's 'broken, lone, leprous, hunchbacked and deathpale moon which wanders in search of medicine'. Mani's syntax, however, becomes irritating at times, no matter how modern it might be.

Vaitheeswaran's (b. 1936) poems appeal to the intellect rather than to the emotion, with a dominant metaphysical tone. Images stand in the background to project his thoughts:

There lay my stretched shadow
As a derelict corpse
Is it I
Or my cartoon on the ground? (tr.)

C. S. Chellappa (b. 1912) normally a level-headed critic, made wildly inflated claims for the poets he introduced in his *Eḷuttu*. Yet the formative influence they had on the younger generation cannot be denied. Many of these poets were charged with ugliness, brutality, crudity and frustration by some critics. Some of their poems were on bleak and black subjects: death, mechanical life, cowardice, lack of faith, lack of ideals, feelings of sickness, nausea, *ennui* and religious terror. Some of them were convinced by the theories of Freud and the work of Surrealists that every poet has enough to write in his own mind, without having to struggle to be classic, social, relevant and so on. Some of them attempted to transplant western sensibilities into the unreceptive soil of Tamil poetry. Vagueness, intellectual mistiness and perversion marred some of their work. Yet this was an exciting period of experimentation and inquiry when old taboos crumbled and new forces were released.

The next phase started in the sixties with Gnanakoothan (Ñānakkūttan, b. 1938), a remarkable poet who introduced satirical realism. Most unromantic, he has a peculiar elfish spirit of mockery. His semi-serious raillery springs from a feeling that the generally accepted code is all wrong:

You made this world a latrine
By your words, 'Do the work'
Which stinks like the fart. (tr.)

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Some of his poems are dream-fantasies with sexual overtones.

Kalapriya Somasundaram (Kalāppriyā Sōmasundaram, b. 1950) is another powerful young poet. The influence of Tagore is easily discernible in his writings. His images are mostly unpoetic:

Her looks are
Hungerless crows
Which search and peck
The swine
Which runs to hide
With wounds, screaming. (tr.)

Sachitanandam, R. Meenakshi, Neela Padmanabhan, Ma. Dakshinamoorthy, Ko. Rajaram, Neelamani, Atmanam, Kalyanji, Balakumaran, Malan and Hari Srinivasan are some of the other poets of this period who made notable contributions to Tamil poetry. These poets offer a view of the various, and often conflicting, influences that moulded them. Their poetry is typical of the contemporary period, with its tensions, alienations, secret core of pain, its disbelief and disillusionment.

The Progressive Poets

The October Revolution stirred and inspired the Indian intelligentsia. The ideas of Socialism not only fascinated but also influenced the thinking of prominent poets and scholars in Tamil also. Though the Socialistic ideologies were known even before Independence, the influence of Marx and Lenin was more marked and widespread only after Freedom.

Inspired by the October Revolution, Bharati dreamed of a Socialist society in India. The same desire was forcefully expressed by Bharatidasan, and in a milder and more poetic tone by Kambadasan.

Thiru Vi. Ka. (Tiru Vi. Kalyāṇacundara Mudaliār, 1883–1954), a renowned Tamil scholar, orator and writer, who was connected with trade union activities, wanted to create a new theory blending Marxism and Gandhian thought to suit India.

The Progressive Writers' Association of Tamilnadu was formed in 1948. But it was only after the formation of the Academy of Arts and Literature in 1954 by the Communists of Tamilnadu that progressive literature gained momentum. *Tāmarai*, a progressive literary magazine edited by P. Jeevanandam, a renowned Tamil scholar and a leader of the Communist Party, created a new front in the field of modern poetry. In the beginning, it published only progressive poetry written in conventional metre. Jeeva (P. Jivanandam, 1907–63), C. Raghunathan (Rakunātan, b. 1923) and K. C. S. Arunachalam (Aruṇācalam, b. 1921) were notable poets who contributed to this magazine. Until the sixties, *Tāmarai* condemned New Verse for its reactionary and negative character. Vanamamalai, a Marxist critic, accused New Verse of containing the reactionary elements of Freudianism, Surrealism and Existentialism and alleged that it reflected frustration, dejection and emptiness. But in time, *Tāmarai* realized the power and influence of this form and began to publish New Verse, but with progressive content, of course. This encouragement unearthed a number of talented young poets. Thi. Ka. Sivasankaran, who wrote prose-poems in 1946, was the critic who brought about this revolutionary change. A new wave of progressive prose-poetic form was created by the young poet Na. Kamarajan (Na. Kāmarācan, b. 1942) in 1968. Meera, Sirpi, Puviarasu and Tamizhanban who later became major progressive poets, began contributing to *Tāmarai*, poems charged with progressive revolutionary ideas. Kai. Thirunavukkarasu, Navabharati, Agniputran, Tamizhnadan, Sakthikkanal, Prabhanja Kavi and Ko. Rajaram are other notable poets introduced by *Tāmarai*. A large number of translations from the Russian also appeared in the magazine. The role played by such critics as Na. Vanamamalai, K. Kailasapathy (Kailācapati), Sivathambi, Kanagasabhapathy, Tamizhavan and Gnani, who analyzed modern poetry in terms of Marxist thought, should also be mentioned, as it moulded and guided progressive poetry.

In 1971, some of the poets in Coimbatore banded themselves together as 'Vānambāḍies' (Skylarks), with the intention of devoting themselves to progressive poetry. For a time they held progressive views of varying degrees of intensity. They concerned themselves more directly with the social and political aspects of human life. In their manifesto they declared war against social injustice. They refused to acknowledge propaganda and party slogans as poetry. They called themselves 'skylarks which sing humanism'. They published an unpriced poetry magazine called *Vānambāḍi* meant for private circulation. They meant conducted seminars to discuss literary problems. And they were not committed to any political party.

Though all the progressives were not affected by the doctrines of Marx, all of them believed that poetry was concerned with man in society. They produced poems full of righteous indignation over the callousness of the rich and verses full of pity for the poor. They condemned those who used poetry as a means to appeal directly to the subconscious mind, for their poetry was a conscious criticism of life. They attempted to discard all tradition and ordered revaluation of democracy and history as their inspiration. They believed in the dynamic power of poetry in changing the world. They hailed every struggle for liberation. They upheld the glory of humanism.

Though many scholars hold that the realists are the sworn enemies of symbolism in aesthetics and politics alike, some of these poets use religious and universal symbols, and even mythological images, to come to deeper understanding of the world and the meaning of life. Romantic aesthetics

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is also to be found in several poets. Recurring images, such as 'fire flower' and 'red spring', in their poems show their romantic sensibility. They forget that romanticism generates a tendency to exaggerate and to move away from the conditions of ordinary life, both of which are contradictory to their doctrines.

Some of the progressives are more particular about their message than the art of poetry. In overemphasizing the message, they become prosaic and produce mere statements or observations devoid of poetic merit. Some suffer from long-windedness, others are coarsely bombastic. Such verbal hysteria mars their writing. So much so that in most of their poems we cannot find the poet behind the poem.

Na. Kamarajan, one of the most influential of these poets, entered the field in 1968 with the declaration that 'he is a cuckoo of the proletariat heralding their spring to them'. His prose-poems display a refreshing romantic aestheticism and his metaphysical images have won him attention. Influenced by translations of Persian poems and Malayalam lyrics, he brought such symbols as 'bul-bul', 'rose' and 'camel' to Tamil. A poet drunk with words, he is fascinated by Sanskrit and Malayalam terms. His flowery style has been adopted by some young poets, many of whom have been attracted by his form and themes such as 'the criminals who arraign the court of Justice', 'the hermaphrodites', 'the spinsters', etc. His drunkard asks the court:

Can you punish the crimes
and protect the criminals
.....
Sin is not the seed of creation. (tr.)

and his prostitute pleads:

We sell nudity
To buy clothes. (tr.)

He sometimes provides a flood of contradictory imagery that is weakened by far-fetched conceit.

Meera (M. Rājēntiran, b. 1938), a decorous progressive poet, is sincere and simple. The quiet, deliberately unshowy quality of his work guides many. When he says, in one of his love-poems, that he is as wonder-struck by the extraordinary beauty of his beloved as an Indian farmer is when he sees the cooperative farms of the Soviets in pictures, his love of Russia seems to be greater than his love for his beloved. His satirical poems in the collection *Ūcikaḷ* (Needles) are sharp, crisp, witty and sardonic.

Inqulab (Iṅkulāb, Ṣāhul Hamīd, b. 1944), a political poet committed to left-wing ideology, is a bitter critic of present India. According to him, Independence is a drama. He feels that a right has been given to the rich Indians to exploit their own people. His love of the working class makes him see the ocean as the sweat of the labourer-earth. The same love sees the *Gīta* in a manner hostile:

For how long you will be deceived
By the tune of the Flute which says:
'Do your duty without expecting the fruit'. (tr.)

Sirpi (Cirpi Pālacupramaṇiam, b. 1936), the main driving force of the 'Vānambāḍi', is a refined poet. He believes that if poetry is to try to make sense of the present, it must be pellucid and precise. He prefers long narrative poems and they are remarkably organic, like well-written short stories.

Puviarasu (Puviyaracu, b. 1931) is another important poet. He represents the transition from traditionalism to modernism. He is an experimentalist among the progressives. He regards Jesus as the revolutionary who fought against the conservatism of his times. Some of his poems show that he has been profoundly influenced by the Bible.

Metha's (Muhammad Mēta, b. 1945) first collection of poems, *Kaṇṇīrppūkkaḷ* (Tear-flowers) made him one of the most talked of young poets. He is, perhaps, the only poet among the progressives who accepts Gandhi. His poem *Tēcappitāvukku Oru Teruppāṭakanin Añcali* (A Street-singer's Homage to the Father of Nation) made him very popular.

Tamizhanban (b. 1943), a talented poet who is powerfully expressive, and Vairamuttu, one of the most interesting poets to emerge recently, deserve mention as they refuse to sacrifice beauty for the sake of the message. Tamizhnadan is noted for his documentation and 'mocking voice'. His volume *Amma Amma* breathes humanism and was written out of a fervent conviction that men of all countries must live together and love one another.

Abi (Habibullah) and Abdul Rahman are two poets who stand apart from the warring groups. Abi, an Expressionist, is pleasingly original among the modern poets. He writes poetry of extraordinary concentration and purity in a laconic style, using deft images. He is an introvert and his intense subjectivity is his strength as well as his weakness. The agony in his poems is too much to bear and the soul, weary with the blows life has dealt it, wants to go back to where it came from—to death, to darkness:

It is better to fall
Like seeds from the lap of death
Than to fall like dry leaves
From the lap of life. (tr.)

Abdul Rahman is an impressionist and experimentalist. He draws some of his images from the unconscious by means of free association. He writes using a succession of absolute images; his poetry is concrete, usually concentrated. He is deeply concerned with the degeneration of

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mankind. He considers myth as a powerful means to give depth to his thoughts.

Poetic Symposium

Poetic symposia (*Kaviaraṅgam*), which have become an inevitable feature of any literary function and festival nowadays, paved the way for a revival of interest in poetry as a performer's art. These symposia are conducted more or less like poetry seminars. A topic is given to each poet under a general head. Addressing the presiding poet and the audience, the poet reads a poem stressing the importance of his topic and comparing it with those of others.

C. Raghunathan (b. 1923) first introduced a slight modification of the conventional metre used by all the poets. M. Karunanidhi is the poet who popularized poetry reading among political audiences. His cadenced prose often reveals the skeleton of a 'regular' metric pattern underneath. Abdul Rahman brought New Verse to the poetic symposium and abandoning all formalities set a new trend with his metaphysical images. Kannadasan, Mudiarasan, Tamizhanban, Murugu Sundaram, Sirpi, Metha, Vairamuttu, Ponnivazhavan, Pulamaippittan and So. So. Mee. Sundaram are other successful poets in the art of poetry reading.

Form—Innovations and Experiments

Due to the emergence of the renaissance spirit, Tamil poetry underwent a radical change in content as well as in form. In 1901, Suriyanarayana Sastri, a scholar both in Tamil and English literature, first introduced the sonnet to Tamil. But he has used this form only for describing nature and not for romantic themes. Bharati also attempted this form. But both were not successful in their attempts. Only Thooran achieved success in handling the sonnet form.

Sindu, a form having two or four lines with initial rhymes or alliteration, was developed from folk-songs and popularized by Bharati. As Bharati wanted to sing of freedom and nationalism for the common people, he aptly chose a form to their liking. Bharatidasan, Somu, Tamizholi and Tamizhazhaghan developed variations in *sindu* and added lustre to the form.

Kottamangalam Subbu popularized folk-metre with colloquialism. Such metre gained literary merit in the hands of Pattukkottai Kalyanasundaram. Even such poets of New Verse as Kamarajan, Gnanakkootan and Metha are fascinated by folk-metre.

Bharati, Bharatidasan and Suradha wrote narrative poems. Poetic drama was successfully handled by Bharatidasan. The prose-poem was introduced by Bharati and was successfully handled by Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan and Thooran. In 1944, Pudumaippittan, the well-known short-story writer, first tried to break the conventional metre. He used the *veṇkaḷippa* (a form similar to heroic couplets) and changed it according to the speech rhythms to attain the desired effect. Na. Pichamoorthy was the poet who first experimented with *vers libre*.

But modern poets are not radicals or rebels. Some of them have acknowledged the merits of traditional metres and conventional verse forms. They, of course, use them with some changes here and there to suit their content.

Conclusion

A great deal of new poetry meets with indifference because it seems personal and incomprehensible. Some of the poems excite animosity because they state opinions and express feelings which are repugnant to the ordinary man.

We do not find in the Tamil New Poetry the total denial of moral values or the spirit of unflinching moral commitment. A cry for a new order is there, but not the cry of anarchy, which is one of the characteristics of modernism elsewhere.

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Telugu

C. R. SARMA

Introduction

No other literary form has been subjected to so many experiments as poetry. This is what has made it a live genre, preventing it from becoming a showpiece in a museum. Though poetry is not fast-selling these days, a good poet is still a social and intellectual force to be reckoned with. That out of the 18 Central Sahitya Akademi awards for Telugu works so far, eleven have been for poetical works, proves that verse is still pre-eminent.

Modern Telugu poetry is rich and varied, and every year, much of it appears in publication in book-form: several anthologies are compiled containing the works of different authors and selections from poems written by individual poets. Several journals too appear regularly, publishing poems written in *vers libre*, which has come to stay as the most suitable literary form for modern thought. Poems couched in traditional metres also continue to appear, though their numbers have dwindled. Modern poets, therefore, include progressives and revolutionaries, romantics and traditionalists as well as the neo-classicists. But whatever their label, the modern poets divide naturally into two broad groups—those who conform to and those who revolt against traditional patterns of composition. For instance, the early romantics revolted against the traditionalists and the progressives revolted against the romantics. The modern Telugu poets, in their endeavour to reach the common man, have experimented enthusiastically with form and expression. Gone are the days of feudal poetry describing the loves of kings and queens. The common man and the anguish shared by mankind are the themes of the modern poets. As a result, some poems look like second or third impressions of a carbon copy and fail to impress the reader. In others, the propagandist tone comes down heavily on the reader. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that the modern poets have aroused sympathy for the depressed classes even in sophisticated circles. They have created a social awareness which is the most significant achievement of modern Telugu poetry.

The spread of English education, the founding of journals, the social reform and national movements and the audio-visual media movement have all contributed to the emergence of modern Telugu poetry. The writings of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats and the plays of Shakespeare have opened new vistas for young poets attracted by subjective poetry. *Khaṇḍakāvya* (short poem), as opposed to *Mahākāvya* (long or epic poem), has been their forte. Concentrating on the depiction of emotion, they have created new imagery and new forms.

Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu (Kandukūri Vīrēśaliṅgam Pantulu, 1848–1919), generally acclaimed the Father of Modern Andhra, is the first Telugu writer of repute to utilize literature to eradicate social evils. To him, literature was not an aesthetic indulgence but a powerful instrument of reform. A modern man, he realized thef utility of the high-flown style and the classical literary feats that were practised in the name of poetry. He denounced *Citra*, *Garbha* and other forms of poetry favoured by earlier scholars. But Kandukuri himself did not create any new forms and remained a traditionalist as far as poetry was concerned. Even Cattamanchi Ramalinga Reddi's (Kaṭṭamañci Rāmaliṅgāreḍḍi, C. R. Reddy, for short; 1881–1952), *Musalamma Maraṇamu* (1899) a short poem with a tragic ending, cannot be regarded as totally modern. He too was a traditionalist, but with a modern outlook.

The Pioneers. Who then is the first modern Telugu poet? Some critics consider Gurajada Venkata Appa Rao (G. V. Appa Rao, for short, Gurajāḍa Veṅkaṭa Appā Rāvu, 1861–1915) to be the first, while others name Rayaprolu Subba Rao (Rāyaprōlu Subbā Rāvu, b. 1892), both distinguished poets.

Gurajada was definitely a trend-setter. His outlook was modern and he discarded the traditional metres, using instead almost a new one, very near to an indigenous (*dēsi*) metre. Though not a prolific writer, he popularized lyricism in modern Telugu poetry and revived folk traditions. His *Mutyālasarālu* (Strings of Pearls, 1910) clearly reveals his mind to the reader and presents a new vision charged with a universal outlook. Tradition-bound Telugu readers might not have appreciated the poet; but today, Gurajada's greatness has been recognized.

In *Mutyālasarālu*, which is about a comet, Gurajada declares:

If the whole world becomes one house
If racial distinctions vanish
If on limitless bonds of love blossoms joys
all religions will then disappear
wisdom (*Jñāna*) only will shine with brightness
the so-called heavenly comforts
alight on the earth. (tr.)

In the same poem the poet questions the validity of the

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meaningless mythological tales, thus encouraging a rationalistic approach to the ideas of his day.

In another poem (*Lavaṇarāju Kala*, 1911) Gurajada remarks with equal vehemence:

There exist among men only two classes
the good and the bad
If 'good' were the *māla* (māla, meaning Harijan)
I prefer to be a *māla*. (tr.)

Gurajada does not even spare the law-givers of bygone days who called those who were bodily unclean as *māla*. He says that it is these, higher castes, who have impure minds.

Gurajada will always be remembered for his short but powerful poem *Dēśabhakti* (Patriotism, 1910) which consists of only 56 lines. In it he exhorted humanity thus:

Dēśa Manṭē Maṭṭi kādōy
Dēśa Manṭē Manuṣulōy.

(A country doesn't mean a piece of earth
A country does mean its people.)

This lyrical poem, which ridicules narrow parochialism, is considered an 'invocation song' by the progressives and is, today, sung with enthusiasm at public meetings, literary gatherings and the like. I give below my literal rendering of some of its lines:

Love the country
Nourish whatever that is good
give up foolish talk
and think of a benevolent act.

Strive hard in the path
bubbling with milk and crop
strength accrues from food
He who has strength is man.

How can a country prosper
If people are not in good spirits?
Learn with interest all the arts
And fill them with indigenous things.

What is there to look back?
there is little good in the past
Step forward without dullness;
You will be backward if you lag behind.

Indulge not in idle talk
saying I am a patriot;
Do some good deed
And show it to the world.

Hand in hand, unitedly,
people should walk,
Religions and communities
should behave like brothers.

What if religion is different
if people live with unison of mind?
Only then the community develops
and prospers in the country.

A country is like a big tree,
it should blossom flowers of love;
watered by the sweat of the people
the tree should yield crops of wealth.

Concealing between the leaves
should the Cuckoo of poesy speak;
listening to those utterances
love should emanate in the country. (tr.)

Gurajada's poetry though popular during his lifetime, were read seriously only after 1940. He is now hailed as a people's poet, the writer who set the ball of modern poetry rolling.

Rayaprolu Subba Rao, on the other hand, is a traditionalist with a new outlook. His poetry is characterized by *amalina śṛṅgāra* (pure and unadulterated love) which encompasses platonic love, lyricism and subjectivity. The term *amalina śṛṅgāra* was coined by Rayaprolu himself. It has been argued that Rayaprolu did not mean only platonic love by it, but something more, though both lovers advocate the supremacy of inner beauty over physical charm. Rayaprolu was influenced by Tagore's view that the Creation is full of love and most of his poems portray pure love in bright colours.

Rayaprolu's *Lalitha* and *Tṛṇakaṅkaṇamu*, (1913) are sweet and short poems tinged with romanticism. *Lalitha*, published in 1909, is an adaptation of Goldsmith's *Hermit*. The very title *Tṛṇakaṅkaṇamu*, meaning 'Bangle of Grass' is a fine example of Rayaprolu Subba Rao's philosophy of love. The poem describes lyrically the pure love which Rayaprolu advocates. To understand its significance, a gist of the poem is given below:

A girl of about fourteen, one day goes in the hot sun to a grove. Hearing her anklets,
her pet deer follows her. She sits under the
shade of a big tree and looks at the
ring adorning her finger and the silken
thread tied around her wrist. The deer goes to
sleep. Soon, a young man, unable
to bear the pangs of separation, enters the
garden. He and she are bosom friends, but,
unfortunately, are separated, as she is

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married to another man. Frustrated, he renounces
his marriage. Unable to contain himself,
he recalls with sorrow and anguish
his love for her. He approaches her and they
exchange glances. Soon, sorrow
and anguish overtake them; and silence reigns.
He breaks the silence, addressing her as
friend, but cannot continue his speech
further. She realizes his deep affection for her.
After a while, she requests him to untie the
silken thread tied round her wrist. He does it with
a heavy heart. He then prepares a bangle
from the tender grass nearby fastens it in
between her bangles and addresses her as sister.
He also expresses his last desire in the following
words: 'Wear this bangle of grass on your wrist
and nourish it with your tears generated from
love and keep it ever green'. In turn, she adorns
his finger with her ring and they part. (tr.)

The poet ends by saying that though the lovers are separated again, their bonds of love will long endure.

It is significant that the silver jubilee of the first edition of this poem, which opened a new chapter in modern Telugu poetry, was celebrated with great enthusiasm in Hyderabad.

Inspired by Rayaprolu's romantic poetry, several poets followed suit. Thus, he gave a new direction to the age-old Telugu poetry, even though he continued to use traditional metres. His poems are free from flamboyancy and his style is simple and flowing, contributing to their popularity.

But all Rayaprolu's poetry is not romantic poetry. Some of his poems also ring with patriotic fervour. It is significant that both Gurajada and Rayaprolu introduced a patriotic note in Telugu poetry. The former's patriotism was tinged with his universal outlook while the latter glorified love of one's country, language and culture. Rayaprolu was a revivalist. Both poets treat the subject of woman with utmost respect and not as an object of pleasure. Rayaprolu's approach was platonic; Gurajada's was more combative: he contradicted the traditional belief that a woman should treat her husband like God; and said instead that a husband is only a comrade in life.

It is evident that both Gurajada and Rayaprolu set modern Telugu poetry on new tracks, but they directed it in different directions—progressive and romantic.

Popularizing Poetry. Before dealing with the romantics, mention should be made of two distinguished poets who popularized poetry among the lettered and the unlettered alike. They were Tirupati Venkata Kavulu (Vēṅkaṭa Kavulu): Divakarla Tirupati Sastri (Divākarla Tirupati Śāstri, 1871–1919) and Chellapilla Venkata Sastri (Ceḷḷapilla Vēṅkaṭa Śāstri, 1870–1950). Both of them were products of traditionalism and they generated a mass appeal for classical poetry. Till then, Telugu poetry was mostly the monopoly of privileged classes—the rich zamindars and scholars. But the twin poets created an interest in poetry among all the educated sections of society. They took poetry to the remotest corners of Andhra Pradesh through their *avadhānas* (a literary feat demanding concentration). They were outstanding *Śatāvadhānis* (a person who can attend to 100 scholars simultaneously). Their extempore poetry, pleasing and simple, attracted the average man. Several poets of the day became their disciples and composed spontaneous poetry before learned audiences. Veluri Sivarama Sastri (Vēlūri Śivarāma Śāstri, 1892–1967), Viswanatha Satyanarayana (Viśvanātha Satyanārāyaṇa, 1895–1976), Pingali Lakshmikantam (Piṅgaḷi Lakṣmīkāntam, 1894–1972), Katuri Venkateswara Rao (Kāṭūri Vēṅkaṭēśvararāvu, 1895–1962) and a host of others were worthy disciples of the great masters of poetry. Though the impact of the poetry of the twin poets is not considerable today, extempore poetry (*āśu kavita*) is still in vogue and is practised as an art by several *avadhānis*. If simplicity of style is one of the salient features of modern poetry, it is abundantly achieved in the poetry of the twin poets. In some places, their poetry, though written in traditional metres, reads like poetic prose and this conversational style has not only lent it grace but has also made it enchanting and absorbing.

More or less contemporaneous with Tirupati Venkata Kavulu were Chilakamarti Lakshminarasimhamu (Cilakamarti Lakṣmīnarasiṁhamu, 1857–1945), Panuganti Lakshminarasimha Rao (Pānuganṭi Lakṣmīnarasiṁhārāvu, 1865–1940), Balijepalli Lakshmikantam (Balijēpalli Lakṣmīkāntam, 1881–1953), Vedam Venkataraya Sastri (1853–1929), Vaddadi Subbaraya Kavi (1854–1938), Dharmavaram Ramakrishnamacharyulu (Rāmakṛṣṇamācāryulu, 1853–1912) and a few others who popularized poetry through their dramas which were witnessed by packed audiences for two or three decades. More than a lakh of copies of *Gayōpākhyānam* (the story of the mythological Gaya, 3rd ed., 1928), written by Chilakamarti, were sold.

The Romantic Poets

The romantic movement (Kālpanikōdyamam) is one of the earliest movements which shaped modern Telugu poetry. Though it exerts little or no influence today, it was a major force between 1920 and 1940, during the heyday of the romantic poets. The popular name of the new movement, *Bhāva kavita*, literally meaning 'emotion-centred poetry', was coined by Gadicherla Harisarvottama Rao, a litterateur and a nationalist. In *Bhāva kavita*, even a casual reader can find a few distinguishable varieties—love poetry, pastoral poetry, patriotic poetry, mystic poetry, etc. with

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love, of course, dominating. Most of the romantic poets were considerably influenced by Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, Rabindranath Tagore and Persian mystics, leading to some of them being called the 'Andhra Wordsworths' and by similar sobriquets.

To the romantic poets, time-honoured conventions had little attraction. Freedom was their very breath. They would not compose a verse to please anyone, nor did they care whether others derived pleasure from their poetry. The romantic poet sang for himself. He could find pleasure even in sorrow and suffering. The credit of freeing the poet from shackles and making him breathe free again should go to the romanticists. However, this freedom was illusory. Living in his ivory tower and wandering in a dream or imaginary world, the romantic poet became a stranger to the real world in which he lived. He became so self-centred that he did not care even to understand the miseries of his fellow-men. The result is that romantic poetry appeared unreal and failed to establish itself. Another drawback in romantic poetry is that no importance has been given to the narration element. Repeated portrayal of one's real or imaginary sorrows and sufferings, or joys and pleasures, and the expression of certain sentiments does not always make a piece of writing interesting, however great the poet may be. Such poetry appears like a collection of mellifluous words, merely.

Whatever adverse criticism is levelled against romantic poetry, it should in all fairness be said that the romantic poets gave a fresh lease of life to the tradition-bound Telugu poetry. Several poets took special care in selecting sweet sounding and simple expressions. Even the compounds they employed (*samāsas*) are pleasing to the ear. It may be said that they chiselled words and expressions, with the result that these poets concentrated more on expression than on content. *Bangāru Saṅkeḷḷu* (Golden Shackles), *Timira Lata* (Creeper of Darkness), *Prēma Sāmrājyam* (Kingdom of Love), *Kaṇṭaka Kirīṭam* (Thorny Crown) are a few of the numerous new expressions coined by the romantic poets that have not only become popular but have also become part of the language. The romantic poets certainly enriched the Telugu language.

Abburi Ramakrishna Rao (Abbūri Rāmakṛṣṇa Rāvu, 1896–1979), Duvvuri Rami Reddi (1895–1947), the twin poets Venkata Parvatiswara Kavulu (Bālāntrapu Venkaṭa Rāvu, 1880–1974) and Oleti Parvatisam (Ōleṭi Pārvatīśam, 1882–1955), D. V. Krishna Sastri (1897–1980), Adivi Bapiraju (1895–1952), Kavikondala Venkata Rao (b. 1892), Vedula Satyanarayana Sastri (b. 1900), Nanduri Venkata Subba Rao (1895–1957), Nayani Subba Rao (1899–1978) and a host of others have, by their works, nourished the romantic movement. Tallavajjhala Sivasankara Sastri (later Śivaśankara Svāmi, 1892–1977) lent tremendous support to these new poets who made Telugu poetry elegant and less pedantic by introducing a lyrical element into their writings. The renaissance in Telugu poetry also produced a spate of fine translations or transcreations of several renowned poems from Sanskrit, English, Persian, Bengali and other languages.

If Rayaprolu is the forerunner of the romantic movement in Telugu poetry, Devulapalli Venkata Krishna Sastri (D. V. Krishna Sastri for short; Kṛṣṇa Śāstri, 1897–1980) is its most eloquent exponent. A truly modern poet, his name has become a synonym for 'Bhāva Kavi'. There were days when the Andhra youth not only tried to imitate his writing, but even his hair-style. His total literary output has not been much; but whatever he has written is enchanting, as may be judged from these translations:

Please, have no compassion for me
Who do you think I am?
I am the Lord of the world of
limitless sorrow, awe and darkness—
Didn't you notice me
When I, adorned with the thorny crown,
giving audience in the cloud-clad royal court
and singing in unison with the cries of owls
my songs of sorrow overflowing and overflowing
and making the dread night dreadful
Please have no compassion for me
I have with me
fans of sighs
heaps of tear-garlands
unique and unending treasures of sorrow
which give me immense delight
Who do you think I am?

* * *

The full moon
wanders like a royal swan
in the lake of the blue sky,
the sweet southern winds
hide themselves under the leaves of branches
In the waves of the sea,
The river
goes into deep slumber
giving up dance and sweet music;
The universe
rests quietly
in the lotus-like hands of the Almighty.

* * *

Why should flowers spread fragrance
Why should the moon spread moonlight
Why should water flow
Why should the wind blow
Why should my heart love you. (tr.)

Lyrical Poets

When the romantic movement was in full swing, a few memorable lyrical writings were produced that are re-

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and enjoyed to this day. Basavaraju Appa Rao (Basavarāju Appā Rāvu, 1894–1933), Nanduri Venkata Subba Rao (Naṇḍūri Vēṅkaṭa Subbā Rāvu, 1895–1957), Konakalla Vankataratnam (Konkaḷḷa Vēṅkaṭaratnam, b. 1909) and a few others contributed fine lyrical songs. Even traditionalists like Kavi Samrat Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Puttaparti Narayanacharyulu (Puṭṭaparti Nārāyaṇācāryulu, b. 1915) and others were attracted by lyrical rhythms. Puttaparti has only recently published the first volume (*Bāla Kāṇḍa*) of his massive lyrical work *Janapriya Rāmāyaṇam* (1978) comprising 974 pages. Mallavarapu Visvesvara Rao (Viśvēśvara Rāvu, b. 1906), Balantrapu Rajanikanta Rao (Bālātrapu Rajanīkanta Rāvu b. 1920) and Achanta Janakiram (Ācanṭa Jānakirām, b. 1903) are a few noteworthy products of the lyrical movement founded by D. V. Krishna Sastri. J. Rukmininatha Sastri deserves special mention for his bewitching parodies of the poems composed by almost all the leading poets of his day.

Nanduri Venkata Subba Rao's *Yeṅki Pāṭalu* (Romantic Lyrics on Yeṅki, 1925), is a fine collection of 35 songs which have attracted the attention of several scholars. Couched in folk-language, *Yeṅki Pāṭalu* provides some fine sentiments on love in the gentle words of the heroine and hero, Yenki and Nāyuḍu Bāva respectively. They also provide some beautiful imagery that defy translation. However, an attempt is here made to render in English some of the more popular lines from the lyric mentioned above;

'The garden went into slumber, hiding in the womb of the river!'
'He refused to give an embrace even to the breeze!'
'Flowers know my heart-break and the water my disturbed heart!'
'The river ruminates devouring all the light!' (tr.)

A reference has already been made to Viswanatha Satyanarayana whose literary output is stupendous. A versatile genius, he wrote *Kinnerasāni Pāṭalu* (The Lyrics of Kinnerasani, a rivulet in Krishna district), which is rich in imagery and vibrates with emotion. A classicist by training and temperament, he has to his credit many poems, long and short, including his magnum opus *Rāmāyaṇa Kalpavṛkṣamu*, which won for him the Bharatiya Jnanpith Award in 1973 and placed Telugu language on the all-India literary map. Viswanatha, in his characteristic way, gave the following reasons for writing it:

You ask
Why I write
the same old story
Everybody eats
the same old food
since
his taste and life
are his own.

Everybody lives
the same old life
since
his experience
is his own.

I describe
the same old God
since
my faith and style
are my own.

(tr. B. V. Narayana Rao, *Triveni*, Golden Jubilee Number, 1978)

The story of the *Kinnerasāni Pāṭalu* is about a meek housewife, Kinnera, who is ill-treated by her mother-in-law. Her husband is helpless as he can neither disobey his mother nor console his wife. Kinnera, unable to bear the ill-treatment any longer, leaves her home for the forest. Her husband follows her and takes her into his arms. In his embrace, she melts into water and flows in a stream. Weeping inconsolably, he becomes a stone. This is the prelude. In other songs are described Kinnera's origin, gait, dance, music, sorrow, etc. Finally, the rivulet's confluence with the mighty river Godavari is narrated.

Traditional Poems

Even though free verse has gained ground, traditional poetry has not faded out completely. There are several poets who employ traditional metres though their outlook is modern. For instance, G. Joshua (Jōṣuā, 1895–1972), a well-known traditionalist, has to his credit poems like *Gabbilam* (Bat-Messenger to Lord Siva, 1941) which ridicules the caste-ridden society. Another memorable poem is *Firadousi* (1932). To some of the traditional poets, lesser known characters of India's epics, such as, Ahalya, Kunti and others, are as important as the major characters. Jandhyala Papayya Sastri (Jandhyāla Pāpayya Śāstri, b. 1914), better known as 'Karuṇaśrī', has written an excellent poem on Kunti. His poem on Buddha is another remarkable contribution and has gone into several editions. *Soundaranandam* by Pingali Lakshmikantam and Katuri Venkateswara Rao, *Śiva Bhāratam* by Gadiyaram Venkatasesa Sastri (b. 1901) and *Āndhrā Purāṇam* (a metrical poem tracing the history of the Telugus, 1954) by M. Satyanarayana Shastri (Satyanārāyaṇa Śāstri, b. 1920) are some of the important long poems couched in traditional metres. Utpala Satyanarayanacharya (Satyanārāyaṇācārya, b. 1928) has written a satirical poem (*Zaṇṭa Nagarālu*) on the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad, providing ample proof that the traditional metres can favourably be used for describing modern society.

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Patriotic Poems

Along with the lyrical poetry several patriotic poems saw the light of day. The Andhra movement seeking a separate state, inspired several poets to sing the past glories of the Andhras. Rayaprolu's *Āndhrāvali* (Glory of the Andhra, 1914), Visvanatha's *Āndhrā Praśasti* (The Excellence of the Andhras, 1927), Kodali Venkata Subba Rao's *Hampi Kṣētram* (1933, poem on the historic city of Hampi), Tummala Sitaramamurthi's (b. 1901) *Rāṣṭragānam* (in praise of the state, 1938) are some of the better known patriotic poems. Inspired by the Gandhian thought and the nationalistic movements, Garimella Satyanarayana (1892–1952) had contributed several patriotic poems which were a source of inspiration to the Telugu masses of those days.

The Progressives

The progressives revolted against the increasingly stale and insipid poetry of the romantics, who allowed mellifluous expression and pleasing compounds to dominate their writings, pushing back the emotional element and becoming oblivious of social realities. The progressive movement received a tumultuous welcome from the young poets who had become sick of the stereotyped romantic poems. But before it could acquire a definite shape and direction and become one of the major movements in modern Telugu poetry, a few notable experiments were conducted which may be described as the forerunners of the new movement.

The new poets waged war against the traditional rules of prosody and imagery. They tried to free poetry from the shackles of prosodial constraints and began to employ *vers libre* instead. Pathabhi (T. Paṭṭābhirāmi Reḍḍi), who described himself as an 'ahambhāva kavi', suggesting that he was opposed to the once popular 'bhāva-kavi' declared:

> With my hard stick of prose-poems
> I shall break the backs of the metrical poetry. (tr.)

Sri Sri (Śrīraṅgam Śrīnivāsa Rāvu, 1910–83), who is the live wire of the progressive movement, observed that when he attempted to express what he saw and heard, words came to him:

> Crossing the burial ground like dictionaries
> freeing themselves from the shackles of grammar and
> giving up the serpent-embrace of prosody.

He also described the prosodial rules as 'Chandō Bandōbust' (a security arrangement). It is evident from this and other observations, that the modern poets favoured the use of prose-poems and discouraged recognized metrical verse. This is one of the noteworthy changes ushered in by the progressive poets.

Pathabhi's *Fidēlu Rāgāla Dozen* (A Dozen Symphonies or Notes on Violin) with its refreshing imagery, is one of the earliest experiments in modern poetry. This bold satirical poem poohpoohing the style and thoughts of the romantic poets failed to receive due notice from writers and critics alike, perhaps, due to the author's lack of commitment to any current political thought in the country.

Another notable poet who shaped the prose-verse is D. Balagangadhara Tilak (1922–66), whose prose-poems are not only pleasing but rich in content. In his talented writings, one can find a skillful admixture of modern and traditional expression. According to him, the fundamental function of poetry is bliss (*ānanda*). Whether it sprinkles fire or showers nectar, poetry is an alchemy whose formula is known only to a good poet, he contended, and condemned the unintelligibility of modern poetry.

Three poets (Bellamkonda Ramadas, b. 1923; Kundurti Anjaneyulu, 1922–82; and Elchuri Subrahmanyam, b. 1920) who have become famous and are called after their collection *Nayāgarā* (Nayagara poets, pub. 1944) had in the early years of prose-poem tried to shape the form. Wedded to a socialistic outlook, they had tried to express through their poems their resentment against war.

There is a view that progressive poetry originated with Sishtla Umamahesvara Rao (Siṣṭlā Umāmahēśvara Rāvu, 1898–?) who died prematurely. A student of English literature, he was familiar with modern trends in English poetry. He was also acquainted with music, including folk melody. He wanted to free Telugu poetry from its traditional shackles of prosody. He called his poetry *Prahlāda Kavitvam* perhaps because he wanted to rescue Telugu poetry from the clutches of metrical rules in the manner the puranic hero Prahlada freed himself from demoniac brutality. Sishtla tried to usher in a revolt in thought as well as language. In this connection, it should be mentioned that Abburi Ramakrishna Rao and Sivasankara Sastri though romanticists by temperament, unreservedly encouraged the new poets by giving their poems a patient hearing and popularizing them at formal and informal literary gatherings.

Though essentially a fiery and powerful prose writer, Chalam (Guḍipāṭi Venkaṭachalam, 1894–1979), a close friend of Krishna Sastri, Nanduri and Sri Sri, is also a poet in his own right. His prose translation of Tagore's *Gitāñjali* is widely read in Telugu.

Musings

> the night
> is your veil
> and the stars
> your lamps

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the earth
is your cradle
and i am your toy
rocking
in your
embrace

with you
i play and prank

for you are
my pride
and frustration

and

i bring
for your pleasure
the glorious days
and joyful sunsets

within
you
the world

and

you
within
my desire. (tr. Vazir Rahman)

B. V. Singaracharya (Siṅgarācārya, 1918–78), a poet of promise in his early years, who almost gave up writing poetry in his later years, has written a few brilliant prose-poems under the title *Vibgyor* (colours of the rainbow). One of these poems, *Navya Sṛṣṭi* (*The New Creation*) is given here, as translated by his brother B. V. Srinivasacharya, also a well-known poet.

I'm mount Kanchanaganga
This entire world I command
pious is my Bharath
Birthright is my world-teacherhood.

I'm the son of Bharath
I'm the teacher of the world
I'll, in man's heart
Turn the tiger into deer.

I'll, in Man's mind
turn the darkness into light
I'll turn this space into a
golden cup of nectar
I'll change everything
I'll mould a new world
And start a new reign.

I'll fill the corpse of humanity
with life anew.
A new world with one religion.
Endowed with true knowledge
I'll mould it into a paradise
free of narrowness
Sure I'll create a new world
And rule—wait and see!

I'm saint Bharath
I'm the world teacher
I'm Mount Kanchanaganga. (tr.)

The credit for popularizing progressive poetry as a distinguishable movement among writers, students and the like should undoubtedly go to Sri Sri, who heralded a new epoch in Telugu poetry. To him, everything under the sun—a pup, a match stick, a cake of soap, etc.—are all fit subjects for poetry. This is a noteworthy feature of the modern poetry enunciated by him, since the rhetoricians of the past had recognised only a few subjects as fit for poetry. Past history does not inspire Sri Sri in any way. 'What is there to feel proud of in the history of any country?' he asks. The history of man is nothing but his desire to make others suffer, Sri Sri contends and vehemently declares: 'It is difficult to find a place in the world which has not been a battlefield in the past. The entire past was drenched with tears, if not with blood. The love episode of some queen or the money spent in besieging a fortress does not make history. History should explain the life of the common man in the river valley civilization of the Nile. It should tell us something about the labourers who toiled to construct the Taj Mahal. The details about the palanquin in which a king was borne are not as important as those who bear the palanquin.'

'Agitation is our breath; Revolution our philosophy', Sri Sri once declared. It is, therefore, no wonder that he had latterly become a revolutionary poet. Whether he is a progressive or a revolutionary, he is essentially a poet with a mastery over expression. As Tilak has said, he knows the alchemy of poetry. His powerful diction, vigorous style, perceptive imagery and ideas tinged with humanism make Sri Sri's poetry powerful, purposeful and enchanting. He is wedded to social consciousness. Among his poems, *Mahāprasthānam* (The Great Journey, 1945) strikes altogether a new note and pioneers a new path in Telugu poetry. In *Mahāprasthānam* the poet sounds a clarion call to society to march towards a new world, thereby suggesting the necessity for a new order. In one of his poems, he declares:

The chariot wheels of Lord Jagannath
travelling along the sky-path
to the earth I'll bring down and
generate an earthquake!

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In another well-known poem, Sri Sri sings:

Our view is circumferential
with no beginning or end
we are doubting Thomases
And discontented Socrateses
We are like eternal questions
Answers can never soothe us
We build no walls
Our work is to smash them to shambles
Unrest is our life-breath;
Agitation is our movement
Rebellion is our only philosophy
We march ahead
Despite boulders and obstructions.....
(from *Poet*, Telugu Number, 1974)

Along with Sri Sri, Srirangam Narayana Babu (b. 1906) and Puripanda Appalaswamy (b. 1904) should also be remembered while discussing progressive poetry. Narayana Babu's *Rudhira Jyōthi* (Blood-Flame; 1937) is an excellent work introducing new and ghastly poetic images. He described the requisites of the new poet so:

> We require such poets who can sing background songs when Lord Siva performs the cosmic dance during the time of total destruction!

Another talented writer of the progressive movement is Arudra (Ārudra, b. 1925), the author of *Tvamēvāham* (1949), *Sinīvāli* (1960) and other poems. An experiment-minded poet, he evolved his own technique. Expressions come to him spontaneously. His *Inṭinti Pajyālu* (1969) is a collection of enjoyable mini-poems. But these lines from a well-known long poem of his, inspired by a ghastly event that took place in the Government Hospital, Guntur, are memorable. The title of the poem is *Kukka Campina Biḍḍa* (The Babe the Dog Killed):

The baby Ideal, born recently
In the hospital of i'sms of hope
Is publicly kidnapped and killed by
A 50-megaton terrific country dog.

The drowsing mind minded not the stealthy cur.
The heart that should be vigilant
Was asleep intoxicated.
The labour pains of Mother Progress
proved to be fruitless futile groans.
The eyes that ought to be on guard
Realised not their duty, until
The dirty mongrel tore
And devoured the baby.....

In the hospital of 'isms of hope
We hoped our maladies would end.
The fangs of diseases incurable
Are piercing into our hearts.
Vomiting blood we carry
Ladders on our shoulders
Trying to fix them against the sky.....

....even
In face of Ghatotkacha's havoc
Won't another babe be born
In the hospital of 'isms of hope
and realise the ideal?

The baby that may be born
To fully pregnant Peace,
Should not be allowed to be
Carried away by the country cur.....

Make your heart a cradle.
For the baby yet to be born.
(tr. B. V. Singaracharya, pub. *Veekshaṇa*, 1962)

Sri Sri is lucky in having a band of followers, which is one of the reasons, why progressive poetry has become popular. But along with popularity, the quality has become diluted. Several progressive writings appear lifeless and the expressions and thoughts lack the stamp of individuality. In the initial years of the progressive movement, the poets were Leftists wedded to Marxism. But as years passed, the Leftist stresses became less pronounced. This is a welcome trend, since progressive writing has become free from any 'ism', the chief objective of the poet being to expose the social injustices experienced by the weaker sections of society and to highlight their joys and sorrows. It is also a welcome feature of such poetry that the hero of the poem is not the first person singular, I of the romanticists but the common man. Social consciousness permeates the writings of the progressive poets.

Free Verse Movement

Another movement that has greatly attracted the modern poets is the Free Verse Movement, which reigns supreme at present. Kundurti of the Nayāgarā poets is the champion of Free Verse. He is of the firm conviction that Free Verse alone is the best suited form for the present day and that it can reach the common man. Though he revolts against established conventions, he does not antagonise even the classicists.

Kundurti lists the main requisites of Free Verse as follows: It should be couched in contemporary spoken idiom. It should be fully exposed to the common man for whom it

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meant; the initial or end rhyming and other embellishments are not essential but there must be *visuru* (gusto) in the style. Just as the Sun's rays delve deep into the heart of darkness, so too this *visuru* should have a mutli-faceted effect. Besides describing experiences and the like, Free Verse should also attempt a story.

It is worth mentioning that several writers of today, such as A. Somasundar (b. 1924), Aripirala Viswam (b. 1936), Sila Virraju, V. Mohan Prasad, N. Krishna Kumari (b. 1930), G. Bhaskara Rao 'Ellora' (b. 1929) and many others have published their poems in Free Verse. Kundurti himself has published such works as *Telaṅgāṇa* (1956), *Daṇḍiyātra* (Trip to Dandi), etc. in Free Verse. He is one of the few modern writers who does not hate the past as a matter of course. On the contrary, he observes:

Let one boast of the past
but to read the present is commendable;
It is wrong to forget the past
But hanging on to it is equally wrong. (tr.)

Which is a thought reminiscent of Gurajada's well-known phrase, a 'balanced merger of the old and the new'. Kundurti's poem (*Chōṭlēdu*), quoted below, illustrates his thoughts.

No Room for You and Me

It gives me the creeps to be here;
Come, brother, let's flee this roomless world
into the kinless jungle to while away life
in careless ease
don't you think that the lion, roaring his hungry inten
tions is much better than Man?

It gives me the creeps to be here;
come, brother, let's flee in the palanquin of dangers
crossing the stream and crossing the opposing sands of the
desert
Don't you think the crooked camel that warns us of the
swooping typhoon
is much better than Man?

It gives me the creeps to be here;
come, brother, let's flee in the boat that's ready to cross
the bar;
not a word to breathe until we reach the receding bourne
don't you think that the mighty ocean with its outspoken
billowy challenge
is much better than Man?

It gives me the creeps to be here;
come, brother, let's flee to the fringe of the sky
looking not behind, until we 'scape through the earth's
atmosphere
don't you think that the seething space with its warning
scorching layers
as much better than Man?
Where the green pastures shine the golden gleam of the
early dawn,
Where it pours the heart-borne mercy thick as incessant
rain,
Where the cool breeze of pity blows high and strong,
Where the moon shines like the sparkling imagination
of a mighty poet
Where the gateways of life's mansion burst open on the
corridors of light.
Where inert sky shakes off its lethargic sleep by
stretching its sense of rainbow shape long.
Into that world of infinite beauty
Let's flee, here is no room for you and me.

(tr. G. Sriramamurthy)

Digambara Poets. Before dealing with the neo-classicists, a word about the *Digambara Kavulu* (the naked poets) who hit the headlines in the literary journals for a brief period. The *Digambara Kavulu* are six angry young men who revolted against everything connected with the past and this included classical poetry and all the earlier movements—the romantic, the progressive and the free verse. They did not even like to call their poetry 'prose-verse', even though it could be called by that name. They termed it as *Dik* (direction).

Dissatisfied with the existing conditions of society, these angry young poets revolted against the present order of things, so full of snobbery and self-conceit. They aspire to build a new order, and their objectives are blameless but the repulsive and abusive language in which their thoughts are expressed turned many against them. If the aim of the Digambara poets was to shock readers, they have succeeded. But as poetry, their writings have not generated as much light as heat, though they have discussed bluntly the ills of the days.

The Neo-classicists

It is somewhat difficult to label the present-day poets as romanticists or revolutionaries, etc. since no one follows a particular pattern and since most of the writings are progressive in outlook. Vidwan Viswam (b. 1915), for instance, wrote *Oka Nāḍu* (One Day) in metrical verse, describing the valiant fight put up by a railway gateman against the British soldiers.

Kaloji Narayana Rao (b. 1914), G. Seshendra Sarma (b. 1927), Boyi Bhimanna (b. 1912) and several others have produced some remarkable poems. Some of them are lyricists, some neoclassicists. Special mention should be made of Dasarathi (b. 1927) and C. Narayana Reddi (b. 1930), the prominent poets of today.

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The forerunners of the neo-classicists include M. Buchi Sundara Rama Sastri (1892–1950), Yetukuri Venkata Narasayya (1899–1950), T. Ramalingeswara Rao (b. 1921), among others.

The former Poet Laureate of Andhra Pradesh, Dasarathi, in his younger days, was a revolutionary by nature and produced such fiery poems as *Agnivīṇa*, etc. He was also adept at traditional verse and equally facile in free verse. He has to his credit a number of free verse efforts including *Kavitā Puṣpakam* (The Pushpak of Poesy, 1966), *Ālōcanā-lōcanālu* (The Pondering Eyes or Meditative Eyes, 1975), etc. Narayana Reddi, in the beginning, successfully employed *Mātrācandassu* (lyrical metres) to compose full-length lyrical poems, such as *Karpūra Vasanta Rāyalu* (a poem on the king Karpura Vasantaraya, 1957) etc., which were well-received by discerning readers and critics alike. Later, he switched to free verse and there came from his prolific pen *Manṭalu Mānavuḍu* (Flames-Man), *Madhya Taragati Mandahāsam* (The Smile of Middle Class) and other collections exhibiting his love for mankind. In one of his poems, he declares: 'Poetry is my mother tongue and theme humanism.' The poems of Dasarathi and Narayana Reddi have, on the one hand, contributed to the popularity of progressive poetry while, on the other, they have paved the way for the emergence of neo-classicism. Both of them are also popular lyricists for the screen. Here are a few lines from Dasarathi's poem *Kavitā Puṣpakam*.

A confluence of different cultures
is your heart. On this stage Kambar and
Kabir recite their poetry jointly.
Every day in every heart should take place
the All-India Poets' Meet.
Forget the politics which separates man and man
give up the religion which brings down man and man
come towards the poesy-edifice which unites man and man;
This poesy-edifice is like the Pushpak-plane
In it there will be still room
Whatever the number of passengers be
Come-people of all languages. (tr.)

The universal outlook that is noticed in some of the modern poems is best exemplified in one of the short but powerful poems of Narayana Reddi entitled *Dattaputrika* (Adopted Daughter; a poem included in the author's poetry collection *Inṭipēru Chaitanyam*, 1976).

Conclusion

Of all the literary forms, poetry has undergone the maximum change, both in content and form. Several experiments have also been successfully conducted. Yet the modern poet continues to be relentless, conducting still more experiments in keeping with the changing values and changing human situations of the world. This ever-changing aspect of the world is what makes the poet vigilant and dynamic, and his poetry more and more vigorous. Otherwise, poetry which is in an archaic style, would be fit only for the shelf.

The Telugu poet has imbibed the spirit of revolt, which is discernible in modern poetry. This is the salient feature of modern Telugu poetry. But basically, the conflict is between changing trends and accepted values. In other words, the conflict is between the modernists and the traditionalists. It appears difficult to oust traditional poetry, though modern poetry is gaining ground, which is as it should be.

In modern Telugu poetry, ideas actuated by democracy, social equality, economic justice, humanism and secularism stand out prominantly. Most of the poems are tinged with socialistic ideas. Sometimes they assume propagandist tones. But, unfortunately, the spiritual outlook of the traditionalists and the musical aspect of romantic lyricism are vanishing from the poetry of the progressives and the revolutionaries.

Even a cursory glance at the spate of poems appearing in journals and anthologies, shows that free verse has come to stay in Telugu, being, as it is, favoured by almost all the modern poets. The voices of *Digambara Kavulu*, who startled readers with their shock realism, have become feeble. But their free verse is exemplary. Strangely enough, young poets in Tamil and other languages, have been inspired by these poets who, in their eagerness to condemn the ills facing modern society, have ignored decency and decorum and even employed certain phrases which seem un-Indian. That the Digambara poets have not left an indelible mark only shows that shock realism lends neither grace nor longevity to poetry.

Poetry may generate heat but it should spread light. Only such poetry which spreads light can dispel the darkness of social evils and ennoble the reader's mind. Since the modern Telugu poets are mostly progressives, it is to be hoped that their writings will help eradicate the social evils which, according to them, are responsible for most of our sorrows and sufferings. Thanks to the modern poets, poetry ceases to be the exclusive domain of the privileged classes. And more and more young writers have nurtured the growth of modern poetry in Telugu. Here below is an example of such a poem.

Crooked Thoughts

The crooked thoughts that sprout
in the garden of man's heart,
which ought to be a seat of wisdom,
resemble the hemp plants
in a *tulasi* grove.

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They bring to mind
the long, pointed quills of a porcupine,
or the rough stones of concrete
that raise their ugly heads on the path
when heavy showers
wash away the mud and sand.
The crooked thoughts that prevail in the heart of man,
which ought to be a mine of knowledge and wisdom,
appear like a drop of venom in a pot of pure milk,
and like a worm in juicy fruit,
Tainted like drops of venom,
and despicable like worms,
they devour peace and happiness
and threaten the well-being of man.

(tr. Adapa Ramakrishna Rao)

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Urdu

QAMAR RAIS

Perspective

Modern trends in Urdu literature were a part of the process of reawakening and regeneration of the Indian people as a result of western influences in the 19th century. Even before the introduction of Lord Macaulay's education policies in India in 1835, many Urdu prose writers associated with the Fort William College (1800) in Calcutta were using prose styles quite different from the ornate styles prevalent in the 18th century. An important institution, which played a leading role in introducing western ideas was the Old Delhi College. The first important centre of western education in North India, the college was established in 1825 by the East India Company for the education of Indian students. Many distinguished Urdu scholars and writers of the 19th century, like Mohammad Husain Azad, Nazir Ahmad, Zakaullah, Karimuddin, Ram Chander and Piyare Lal Ashob, all pioneers of modern Urdu literature, were associated with this institution. The journals brought out by the Delhi College published a number of articles criticizing the traditional form and content of Urdu poetry. During this period, European missionaries were also active in educating Indians and a vernacular press that disseminated the new ideas of western liberalism was established in North India. All these factors paved the way for the launching of a Reformist Movement on the pattern of the Brahmo Samaj of Bengal by Syed Ahmad Khan (1817–98).

During the last three decades of the 19th century, the activities of Urdu writers and poets were influenced, if not determined, by the towering personality of Syed Ahmad Khan, who, inspired by Rammohan Roy's movement, started the 'Aligarh Movement', whose objects were the social, cultural, religious and educational enlightenment of the Indian Muslims. Almost all the important writers and intellectuals of this period gathered round Syed Ahmad. Among them were Altaf Hussain Hali (1837–1914) and Shibli Nomani (Śibli Nomānī, 1857–1914), the most prominent literary critics and poets of this period. Inspired, but not directly associated, with the Aligarh Movement were Mohammad Hussain Azad (1833–1910), Abdul Haleem Sharar (1860–1926) and Ismail Meeruthi (1844–1917).

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Pioneers of Modern Poetry

To pull Urdu poetry out of the mire of conventionality, Hali and Azad, at the instance of Col. Holroyd, then Director of Education, Punjab, organized periodically a new type of Poetic Symposium, at which poets were expected to recite poems on subjects announced in advance. These symposia, started in 1874, were the stepping stones of modern Urdu poetry. Hali explained in his *Majmūa-i-nazm-i-Hālī* (1918) that the aim of these symposia 'was to expand the horizons of Urdu poetry, which had become the monopoly of love themes, and also to provide a realistic lease of life to it'.

Hali best represents the spirit of the times. He was the most vocal spokesman of the Aligarh Movement and advocated drastic changes in the modes and patterns of classical Urdu poetry. His poems like *Hubb-e-Watan* (Patriotism), *Ummīd Ki Khuṣī* (Joy of Hope), *Munajāti-Bēwā* (A Widow's Supplication) and *Madd-o-Jazr-i-Islam* (Ebb and Flow of Islam) marked a departure from conventional themes and modes of treatment. The *Madd-o-Jazr-i-Islam* is, in fact, the first long poem in Urdu. In it the poet depicts Islam as a dynamic and humanistic religion inspiring people to rise to exalted heights of thought and action. He attributes the downfall of Muslims and their social evils to weakness of faith and indulgence in superstitious practices.

Muslims who rose to unprecedented heights,
who took their MESSAGE to every corner of earth,
The community which was respected in the Universe,
The community which was named
the noblest of all,
Now has become a non-entity,
They are Muslims now only in name. (tr.)

Muhammed Sadiq extolls this poem thus:

> The best known of his poems and his chief passport to fame is *Madd-o-Jazr-i-Islam*. It is a landmark in the history of Urdu literature because it is the first important poem written after the mutiny.... It supplied the new school with a model work and directed poetry into a new and fruitful channel. Formally too it is no less remarkable. Simple, manly and vigorous, its style is fully equal to the theme.
>
> (*A History of Urdu Literature*)

Under the influence of the reformist movements and western ideas, subjects of national importance began to find a place in Urdu poetry. During this period patriotism, national unity, national progress, women's emancipation and rejection of outmoded conventions were some of the recurring themes of Urdu poetry. We must, however, remember that alongside reformist movements, revivalist tendencies were also active. Urdu poets—Muslims as well as Hindus—were trying to inspire their compatriots by depicting the glorious character and deeds of their ancestors. The poems of Hali, Shibli, Akbar Allahabadi (1846–1921) and, a little later, those of Durga Sahai Suroor (1873–1910) and Brij Narain Chakbast (1892–1926) are replete with patriotic as well as revivalist feelings. These poets recollected with pride the past achievements of their ancestors. Among such poems, Shibli's *Khilafati Farūq Ka Aik Waqia* (An Event of the Period of Caliph Farooq) and Suroor's *Padmani* (a legendary Indian princess) and *Gangaji* (The Holy Ganges) are not only rich in texture but are also ecstatic in tone. In *Padmani* the poet pays glorious tributes to Indian womanhood.

Thou, embodiment of modesty, fidelity and love,
Hast always stood firm
Even if thou hadst to walk on fire. (tr.)

There was during this period an abundance of poems depicting the beauties of nature. This phenomenon owes its genesis to the influence of Victorian English poetry. Many new poets spurned hackneyed subjects and began to write about what they really felt and saw around them. The result was an unprecedented increase in the number of poems devoted to descriptions of nature and its beauty. Some of these poems are, no doubt, merely descriptive with little or no emotional content. But there were also many poems really exciting and beautiful. The same is true of several poems translated into Urdu. Translations done by Nazm Tabatabai, Nadir Kakorvi and Suroor Jahanabadi are poetical and rhythmical renderings of the originals by Tennyson, Thomas Moore, Byron, Gray and Walter Scott, among others. Nazm's translation of Gray's 'An Elegy Witten in a Country Churchyard' in 1897 has become a classic. He successfully lent an Indian semblance to the images and effects of the original poem. This has so enhanced the beauty, melody and pathos that the translated version *Gor-E-Ghariban* reads like an original composition. This translation appeared in *Dilgudāz*, a monthly journal founded in 1887 by the famous Urdu novelist Abdul Haleem Sharar. Incidentally, it was the first publication to introduce Urdu blank verse. A number of articles devoted to discussion of new experiments of form and technique were published in this journal. But, somehow, blank verse did not find favour with either the poets or their readers in the 19th century. Nevertheless, certain new stanza forms, patterned on the western style, gained currency. These forms were also encouraged by such journals as *Makhzan* and *Zamānā* which appeared in the early years of the 20th century. And slowly Urdu poetry shook itself free of the shackles of the classical forms.

Far-reaching changes were also taking place in the po

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tical and social life of India between the two world wars. The Freedom Movement had spread all over the country. The Khilafat and the Non-cooperation movement evoked powerful feelings of resentment against British colonialism. This led to new trends in Urdu poetry in the second and third decades of this century. Muhammad Iqbal (1873–1938) was the outstanding poet of this period. After studying philosophy in England and Germany, he now expressed in verse the sufferings of the exploited millions of his countrymen. As a sensitive artist, he was pained to see the exploitation of the Asian masses by the colonial powers of the West. The crises of the Islamic world also exercised his mind. All these factors imbued his poetry with a profound philosophical sensibility. This period of Urdu poetry is known as the Age of Iqbal. However, the poetry of this period also reveals certain other distinct trends.

Romantic Trend

The greater part of the didactic verse produced under the impact of the reformist movement comprised descriptive poetry, with social themes and political events dominating. Naturally, a new generation of readers reacted sharply against this trend.

This new awareness ushered in a new romantic period in Urdu poetry. Some critics are of the view that, apart from the influence of English romantic poets such as Keats, the translations of Tagore's poems also prompted this romantic trend. Leading literary journals such as *Makhzan*, *Humayun*, *Rūman* and *Nigar* also played an important role in the spread of romanticism. Subjective treatment of the theme, love of detail and sensuous images, obliqueness of expression, search for beauty and new experiments in form and expression became some of the salient features of romantic Urdu poetry.

Among the Urdu romantics Josh Malihabadi (b. 1894), Akhtar Shirani (1900–48), Hafeez Jullundri (b. 1900) and Saghar Nizami (b. 1905) should be specially mentioned. Josh is also regarded as a rebel poet, not only because of his love of freedom and his revolt against the social conventions of his time but also because of a vigorous expression of unbridled passion which is the hallmark of his poetry. The ecstasy which pulsates through all his poems, especially in those about the beauty of nature and woman, gives his poetry a unique romantic fervour. His poems such as *Albeli Subh* (Lovely Morning), *Badli Ka Chand* (Moon in the Clouds) and *Garmi Ki Dopahar* (Midday of Summer) are valuable contributions to Nature poetry in Urdu. In one of his poems, *Robūdgi* (Being Lost) he writes:

The thunder of cloud echoes in the valley,
Big drops of rain are falling down
And I am waiting for someone,
Maybe—but for whom
I don't know. (tr.)

The greatness of Josh lies in the voice he raised against slavery, persecution and exploitation. He considered the priestly class to be the worst exploiters of the common man. In his poems *Maulvi* (Religious Man), *Fitnai Khangah* (Evil of Khangah) and *Zakir* (Preacher) he exposes and ridicules the treachery and hypocrisy of the priests.

Akhtar Shirani's poetry is the embodiment of romantic idealization. He created imaginary beauties and gave them local habitations and names like Salma, Laila and Rehana. Mohammad Hasan has rightly remarked in 'Romanticism in Urdu Poetry', that

> Akhtar considers the female beauty as the epitome of the universe. For him the real world does not exist at all. He seems to live in a fairy world of his own imagination.

Although Akhtar Shirani did not rebel against the classical forms and diction of Urdu poetry, he experimented with the technique of, and popularized, the sonnet form in Urdu. Akhtar Junagarhi and Nazar Mohammad Rashid (1910–77) also wrote sonnets, but it was Shirani who gave it currency in Urdu. His sonnet *Tāssurat-i-Naghma* (Impressions of a Melody) is considered one of his best poems. Thereafter Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi (b. 1916), Aziz Tamannai, Naresh Kumar (pseud.: Shād, b. 1928) and other poets also took to writing sonnets.

Saghar Nizami's romantic sensibility added new symbols and similes, of a distinctly Indian culture to his poetry. Apart from his lyrical poems and verse-dramas, such as *Anarkali*, he wrote a remarkable long poem *Nehrunāma* (Poem on Nehru, 1967) about the many-splendoured personality of Jawaharlal Nehru and his epoch-making contribution towards the social and cultural reconstruction of modern India. Of Nehru's complex character he writes:

Friendless and the pride of the age—
Alone and the smiling spring of time,
Myriad storms in his heart and quiet,
Alone and restless ever,
At times full of joy, at times full of grief,
At times powerless and all alone
Who can claim the knowledge of the fervent heart,
He was alone with a tattered cloak. (tr.)

In parenthesis, one may add that a group of young talented poets, which emerged in the twenties, was greatly inspired by Jawaharlal Nehru and his patriotic ideas. Besides Saghar Nizami this group included Anand Narain Mulla (b. 1901), Al-i-Ahmad Suroor (b. 1914), Ali Jawad Zaidi (b. 1920), Ravish Siddiqi (b. 1911) and Sikandar Ali

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pseud.: Vajd (b. 1914). Stirred by Nehru, they pinned their faith on the concepts of secularism, economic and social equality and national independence. Jamil Mazahari (1906–80), Simab Akbarabadi, (pseud.: Ashiq Husain, 1880–1951) and several others of this period, wrote patriotic poems, hailing the new awakening of Indian masses.

The Age of Iqbal

Many of the poets mentioned above were indebted to Iqbal. Iqbal's own early poems were inspired by either patriotic feelings or beauty in nature. His first collection of poems, *Bāṅgi Darā* (The Call of the Caravan Bell) was published in 1923–24 and contains such poems as 'Taswir-i-Dard' (Picture of Anguish), 'Himala' (Himalaya), 'Naya Shivala' (New Temple) and 'Tarana-i-Hindi' (Indians' Song), which are considered the best in nationalistic and patriotic Urdu poetry. The last named poem virtually acquired the status of a National Anthem in the India of pre-Independence days. Its first line is:

> Sāre Jahān Se Achchā Hindustān Hamāra
> (Our homeland, India, is the most wonderful land in the world).

This collection also contains adaptations of poems from Longfellow, Browning, Tennyson and Emerson. One of Iqbal's critics rightly observed:

> Iqbal's poems till 1905 display the influence of English poetry. Some of his poems are adaptations of English poems. Even his original poems bear similarities of thought and style.
>
> (*Fikr-i-Iqbal* by K. Abdul Hakeem)

The profundity and sublimity of Iqbal's thought lend a unique beauty of form and diction to his poetry. He was attracted by many philosophical problems, during various phases of his poetry, such as time and space, good and evil, Man, his individuality and relationship with society and the universe. But he was equally concerned with the social and economic problems of his time. Apart from Muslim thinkers he was influenced by Kant, Bergson and Karl Marx. Iqbal also actively crusaded against the First World War to achieve the unity and solidarity of Muslims all over the world. He was a bitter critic of Capitalism and the western form of democracy. On the other hand, he hailed the Great October Revolution of Russia as a symbol of liberation and as the awakening of the oppressed working classes. Among the poems he wrote on these themes, *Khizri Rāh* (Khizr, Leading the Way), *Farmani Khuda Fariṣton Ke Nām* (God's Order to Angels), *Karl Marx Ki Āwāz* (The Voice of Karl Marx), *Sāqi Nāma* (To the Saqi) and *Lenin Khuda Ke Huzūr Men* (Lenin in Presence of God) are noteworthy. In *Khizri Rāh*, the poet questions Khizr the prophet about the reality of life, empire, capital, labour, etc. and the Khizr tells him, after analyzing the contradictions of the age, that the age of ancestral rulers has passed and a new era has set in. He says:

> Go and convey my message
> to the workers,
> for my message is
> nothing but the message of the universe.
> O you
> who have been cheated
> by the cranky capitalists,
> for centuries
> your life has been hanging by the thread.....
> race, nation, religion, state, culture and colour
> your masters created
> so many dopes.
> By deceit and crookery
> the capitalist has won
> and the working class
> lost, the wager.....arise
> for the world has taken a new turn
> your era has dawned in the East and West.
>
> (tr. Mohammad Hassan)

In another poem, mentioned above, God delivers this message to his angels:

> The Song of the masses awakening is luxurious joy,
> How long the dreamy tales of Alexander and Jam,
> A new sun has arisen from the earth,
> Heaven, why cry for the stars that have set,
> Man's nature has broken all the bondage and chains,
> How long could Adam weep for a paradise lost,
> Arise and awaken the poor of my earth,
> Shake the portals and walls of nobility's halls,
> Inflame the serf's blood with burning faith.
>
> (tr. Qurratul 'Ain

In his poems Iqbal presents a lofty and dynamic vision of man, full of optimism and faith in human destiny. Iqbal considers man as co-creator of the universe and confirms his immense creative powers. He addresses man in the following words:

> You are a sword; come forth out of your sheath;
> Fulfil your task. Remove the mask from
> The face of all your possibilities.
> Seize sun and moon and stars. Illuminate
> your might with the strong light of certainty,
> Bring out the shining Hand from underneath
> your cloak. If one looks right into one's heart,
> One sows a spark, but reaps a star.
>
> (tr. Hadi Hussain

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'Despite the inner weakness and contradictory nature of Iqbal's world view', observed a Soviet scholar, Gordon Polonskaya in the book *Iqbal: Poet Philosopher of Pakistan*, 'he remained, at all stages of his religio-philosophical and political activity and poetic work, the spokesman for the hopes and aspirations of the Muslim intelligentsia of India, a ruler of its thoughts, an ardent patriot of his homeland, an impassioned fighter against colonialism and any form of oppression of man, and a champion of freedom and humanism.'

Progressive Trends

In the thirties, many factors, national and international, influenced Indian writers. After the Great October Revolution in 1917, socialist ideas started penetrating Indian politics, journalism and literature. The Non-cooperation Movement of Mahatma Gandhi awoke millions of suffering people in India to a new political awareness. In Europe, the war in Spain, the rise of Fascism and the designs of Nazi aggression endangered human civilization. It was against this background that the first Conference of Progressive Indian Writers was convened in Lucknow in 1936 declaring in its manifesto:

> It is the sacred duty of all who love culture to join those forces in our country which are fighting for Indian political liberation and continuing the creative effects and all their mental and moral resources towards the struggle for the people's freedom.

In Urdu, poets like Iqbal and Josh Malihabadi had already raised their voice against the political and economic exploitation of the Indian working people. They had created a favourable climate for the acceptance of new revolutionary values by the younger poets of the day.

Poets like Faiz Ahmad Faiz (b. 1912), Majaz (1911–55), Jazbi (b. 1912), Makhdoom (1908–69), Ali Jafri (b. 1912), Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi (b. 1916), Kaifi Azmi (b. 1918), Jan Nisar Akhtar (1914–76) and Sahir Ludhianvi (b. 1922) established themselves as pioneers of the new realism in Urdu poetry. Some of these poets, like Makhdoom, Kaifi Azmi, Sardar Jafri, Syed Muttalbi and, at a later stage, Faiz Ahmad Faiz had been working in trade union and other revolutionary movements of the peasants and workers, and so had the opportunity to gain first-hand knowledge of the exploited. These poets carried forward the tradition founded by Hali, Iqbal and Josh and made poetry an instrument of direct communication with readers and thousands of listeneres who could immediately respond in *Mushairas*, the traditional Urdu poetic symposia. They were inspired by revolutionary poets like Mayakovsky, Pablo Neruda, Nazim Hikmat and Nazrul Islam. On the one hand they had to fight against obscurantism and the decadent thinking of the middle class; on the other, they took up the task of inculcating new progressive ideas.

Majaz, who died young, was one of the most popular progressive poets of Urdu till the mid-fifties. Mohammad Hasan has rightly observed:

> The buoyant romantic poet, Majaz, who, more than any of his contemporaries, represented the urges of the Urdu-speaking youth of the country, sang of the dawn of socialism.

> Ah! How long these continuous chains of agony,
> sorrow and massacre! After all how long
> can man remain slave to false superstitions.
> In the black stormy night of life
> in the darkness of obscurantism.
> Human mind
> at long last
> had a vision of the Morn.
> At last
> it had seen an unexplored direction. (tr.)

These poets upheld the cause of human freedom and the dignity of Man against all forms of exploitation. The immortality of Man, through his infinite creative labour, is the recurring theme of Ali Sardar Jafri. His longer poems *Nai Dunia Ko Salām* (Salute to the New World), *Asia Jāg Uṭhā* (Asia Awakened), *Jamhūr* and *Avadh Ki Khaki Hasīn* (Beautiful Land of Avadh), are rich in content and imagery. In the poem, about Avadh's artisans, he sings:

> These Gods of labour, these prophets of creation
> Who by the roughness of their hands enrich life
> Under the impact of blacksmith's hammer
> Iron changes shapes
> The potter's wheel is on the move
> And from out of his deft hands
> Goblets come into being and dance
> Out of the black grinding machine
> White flour pours forth like a song
> From the golden hearth, flowers of life come out
> The lips of the oven seem to smile in sparks. (tr.)

A notable contribution of the progressive poets is the successful rendering of social and philosophical themes in long poems. Jan Nisar Akhtar in his long poems *Danai Raz* (Knower of the Secret), *Pāñch Tasvīren* (Five Portraits) and *Sitāron Ki Sada* (Voice of the Planets), all written in the late forties, uses a happy blend of dramatic and narrative sequences to reveal a scientific world view. Sahir Ludhianvi in his long poem *Parchāiyān* (Shadows) defends the treasures of human civilization against the forces of

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war and aggression. Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Makhadoom and Kaifi Azmi protested against all forms of oppression and inequality and passionately asserted the noble ideas of humanism, peace and solidarity among people. The achievements of the progressive movement are many. It changed the ornate and classical poetic diction to that of the spoken language, linked its poetry to the folklore of the country, and drew its imagery and symbols, similes and metaphors from the life around. The movement thus linked Urdu poetry to the common man on the one hand, while on the other, brought it closer to international mass movements. It thus broadened the horizons of Urdu poetry. It also popularized blank verse and free verse in Urdu.

To understand fully the importance of the process of experimentation emanating from western influences, we must mention the efforts made in this regard by followers of yet another literary movement known as *Halqa-i-Arbab-i-Zauq* (est. 1939) which ran parallel to the progressive movement. Among the guiding spirits of this movement were Taseer (1912–49), Miraji (1912–49), Nazar Mohammad Rashid, Mukhtar Siddiqi (pseudonym of Mukhtar ul Haq; b. 1919), Qayyum Nazar (b. 1914) and Akhtarul Iman (b. 1915). Although this movement was confined to the poets of Lahore, it did affect the course of modern Urdu poetry. Young poets of the forties, such as Salam Machlishahri (b. 1921) and Kamal Ahmad Siddiqi (b. 1926) also came under its influence. All the senior poets associated with the movement, except Akhtarul Iman and the two last mentioned, belong to Pakistan. The poets of the *Halqa* paid greater attention to individualistic trends. They eschewed politics and concentrated on the intricacies of the psychic self. They were also more concerned with the style and beauty of form than with the content of poetry.

Two of the *Halqa* poets, viz. Miraji and Rashid, were influenced by trends in western poetry. Miraji had studied English, French and American poets and translated some of them in Urdu. His translations of D. H. Lawrence, Edgar Allen Poe and Baudelaire were well received. He also wrote about the achievements of these western writers and poets. Miraji was particularly influenced by the decadent symbolic poets of France and by the theories of Freud. An unsuccessful love-affair with a Bengali girl, Mira Sen, resulted in an obsession with sex. He writes:

> I consider the sexual act and the things associated with it not only as nature's greatest gift to man but also as man's greatest joy and pleasure. I hate the obscenity which civilization has attached to it. Therefore, as a reaction, I see this act in its natural perspective.
>
> (*Miraji Ki Nazmen*, Dibacha)

Although many of Miraji's sex poems are a reflection of his own morbid obsession, a few of them, such as *Narasai* (Inaccessibility), *Mujhe Ghar Yād Āta Hai* (I Pine for My Home), *Ādam Ki Khala* (Adam's Aunt) and *Ek Śām Ki Kahāni* (An Evening's Tale) present a sublime vision of sex. These poems are symbolical laments about the poet's misfortunes in his sexual adventures. In his earlier poems there is a sense of sexual obsession, defeatism and escapism. But some of his poems, written after Independence, show his concern for the enslaved and persecuted people of Asia.

Akhtarul Iman, the lone Indian poet of the *Halqa* experimented with poetic expression and achieved significant success. He has employed the technique of dramatic monologue in his poems. He has also used dialogue to great advantage and does not rely on any sort of eroticism for effect. This is why his poetry is the most sublime and authentic voice of his times. He has tried to bring back to Urdu poetry the spirit of concern for the anxieties of man. Ignoring his early poems, it can be said that he was the first to speak of cultural disintegration, social chaos and the crisis of moral values to be found in the big cities. He eschewed the political rhetoric of the progressives as well as the morbid individualism of the other poets of the *Halqa*, and chose a separate path. His poems *Tarik Saiyara* (The Dark Planet), *Ahdi Wafa* (Oath of Fidelity) and *Ek Larka* (A Boy) are some of his significant post-Independence poems. I quote from his 'Oath of Fidelity':

> Under this same bough, where
> you are waiting for someone
> with tearful eyes, I found a
> small babe a few years ago. And
> after taking her in my embrace
> I had asked her, why she was crying
> and she had, in reply, showed
> me a lapful of flowery
> ornaments and sighing
> mournfully had pointed out towards
> the rising chimneys of the mills
> telling me that her lover had
> gone there with promise of
> returning with gold and
> silver ornaments
> for her.

Akhtar in these lines has very deftly and subtly brought out the tragedy of love in the industrial age.

The New Talent. In the sixth decade of the present century a new generation of Urdu poets appeared on the literary scene. In their poetry is found an urge to seek new avenues of poetic expression. Most of them, basically a part of the progressive movement but wanting to break free, were to change the existing forms and techniques as well as the poetic diction in vogue. Among such poets, Khalilur Rahman Azami (b. 1927), Bagar Mehdi, Wahid Akhtar, Bashir Komal, Shaz Tamkanat, Qazi Saleem, Shahab Jafri, Ahmad

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Hanafi, Rifat Sarosh, Rahi Masoom Raza, Mazhar Imam and Bashar Nawaz merit special mention. Some literary journals of the time carried polemics and controversies on the new progressivism and the new poetry with Mohammad Hasan, Khalilur Rahman Azmi and Wahid Akhtar taking a leading part in these discussions. These new poets were against the dogmatism that dominated around 1949–50. Remembering this, one of the most prominent leaders of the progressive movement, Sajjad Zahir, wrote in 1966:

> Unfortunately, for a very brief period known as the period of dogmatist deviation in the Communist party (1948–50), some communities attempted to do this with disastrous effects on our movement. Some of our most eminent writers and builders of the movement... were unjustly attacked. The merits and high qualities of their writings were ignored; and quite unjustified and unmerited prominence given to such writings just because they mouthed certain revolutionary slogans. The bitter memory of this period still persists. (tr.)

The emergence of the poetry of new sensibility and the modernist movement are the results, to some extent, of the extremist attitude of the progressives. The younger poets and writers began to look to the West for guidance. In addition to Paul Valery and Ginsberg they also studied the symbolic poets of France and Germany and came in touch with existentialism. In this way they were not only influenced by existentialist philosophy but also by other allied tendencies of post-war European poetry, such as a sense of insecurity, the crisis of human values, the fear of death, alienation, etc. This trend, with varying emphasis, is most prominent in the poems of Wahid Akhtar, Sajida Zaidi, Zahida Zaidi, Qazi Saleem, Balraj Komal and Ameeq Hanafi. They portray the life around them and the conflicts, chaos and anxieties of that life. Some really talented poets like Wahid Akhtar, Ameeq Hanafi and Shaz Tamkanat tried to give a harmonious picture of the disharmony around them. Naturally this process led to the discovery of concrete and visible images, tying them to their surroundings and their land. Wahid Akhtar's *Ban Bās* (Exile in the Jungle), *Khandar Aur Phūl* (Ruins, Evil Spirits and a Flower), Ameeq Hanafi's *Sindbād and Śaherzād*, Shahab Jafri's *Sūraj Ka Shahr* (City of the Sun) and Balraj Komal's *Ākhri Bas* (The Last Bus) are symbolic expressions of some of the poetic contradictions they live in. In their poetry we find not only concern for national issues, but they also seem to reach out to the whole of humanity. The world-view of Wahid Akhtar is a philosophic and cosmic one. Ameeq Hanafi's poems reveal a sense of the crisis of values and a love for India's culture. These poets employ symbols picked up from life around them and can therefore be easily understood and enjoyed. In this they are closer to Akhtarul Iman, with the difference that Akhtar has unshakeable faith in Man's creative faculties as well as the worth of human life. The image of Man projected by Ameeq Hanafi and others is that of a broken, defeated and disillusioned person. They also seem to view with suspicion, the achievements of Man in science and technology.

The early sixties saw the emergence of a new generation of poets. Although some of them had been writing earlier, most of them made their mark only as the modernists of the sixties. *Saughāt*, *Shabkhūn*, *Kitāb* and some other new literary journals encouraged these poets, among whom are Shahryar, Nida Fazli, Adil Mansoori, Kumar Pashi, Mohammad Alvi, Zubair Rizvi, Rashid Azar, Hasan Kamal, Ajmal Ajmali, Hamidi Kashmiri and Atiq Ullah. This generation of individualistic, angry and self-conscious poets almost dominates the Urdu poetry of the sixties. Fortunately, modernity in its many dimensions found some critics, like the poets Bagar Mehdi, Wahid Akhtar, S. R. Farooqi and Ameeq Hanafi as well as the literary elder Al-i-Ahmad Suroor, all of whom supported the rebellious mood of the young poets who challenged the basic tenets of the classical and progressive traditions.

While poets like Adil Mansoori, Kumar Pashi, Mohammad Alvi and Bagar Mehdi (in the late sixties and seventies) showed their poetic sensibility in, noncommitment, use of language and symbols and the treatment of themes—a definite break with the progressive tradition—other poets could not dissociate themselves from the rich and powerful heritage of the progressive poets. Although not committed to any particular ideology, Nida Fazli, Shahryar and other poets of the previous generation have a deep sense of involvement with contemporary life. They also represent the voice of dissent as far as their imagery, expression and style are concerned.

Mohammad Hasan has, in one of his articles 'Jadid Urdu Adab', alluded to the four peculiarities of this trend:

(1) The modernist poets prefer whispers to loud talk. They betray an inclination towards soliloquy rather than rhetoric.

(2) The modernist poetry has a bias for dealing with the personal and the subjective in comparison to the objective and collective experience. In the sphere of the subjective it prefers to concentrate on changing moods and whims, fleeting feelings and delicate sensations.

(3) The modernist poets coin their own imagery instead of adapting the existing images and symbols to their poetic and aesthetic experience. Some of the important and more commonly used symbols relate to nature, open sky, jungles, ocean and the life of big industrial cities.

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(4) In the beginning the modernist trend was dominated by individualism and romantic tendencies. But later on they shifted to realistic trends in voicing their protest against social and economic contradictions of their age. (tr.)

This analysis is, by and large, correct. The deviation from alienation to commitment is clearly perceptible in almost all young modernist poets who appeared on the scene after 1970. Some of them still place greater stress on the subjective; but the social content in their poetry is on the increase and their poetry is permeated with a sense of universal humanism and a realism tinged with the search for newer modes of expression. Consequently, the modernist poetry seems to be forging a new relationship with the healthy trends of the Urdu poetry of the forties and fifties.

Modern Ghazal

The *ghazal* is the most popular form of Urdu poetry. Though the word has Arabic antecedents, it originated in Persian poetry from where it was adopted into Urdu. Despite its rigid system of rhyme and metre, the *ghazal* has been the most widespread creative expression in Urdu from ancient to modern times. It consists of five to 21 couplets each couplet having the same metre and rhyme, and being wholly independent and self-contained. While other classical forms of Urdu poetry declined in the second half of the 19th century, as a result of changes in socio-economic conditions, the *ghazal* maintained its charm and popularity. The most important quality of the *ghazal* is its adaptability to changing social and cultural conditions. Mohammad Sadiq explains some of the peculiarities of Urdu *ghazal*:

> It is a very hospitable form; nothing seems to be alien to its genius, and it has readily accommodated ethics, metaphysics, philosophy, mysticism, satire, politics, side by side with love, which still continues to be its favourite theme.
>
> (*A History of Urdu Literature*, p. 19)

But in the early 19th-century Lucknow, which was then the centre of Urdu literature, a process of degenerate art forms set in which deprived the *ghazal* of its depth of feeling and vigour.

Hali was the first to raise his voice against the artificiality and stylization of the *ghazal*. He made sincere efforts to provide a new orientation to the *ghazal* by bringing it closer to the realities of life and by giving it a didactic stance. Akbar Allahabadi and, a little later, Iqbal followed him. They successfully rendered new ideas of enlightenment and resistance to materialistic western culture, urging the enforcement of moral values in a changing world. Both predicted, about half a century ago, what was to happen on Earth:

> The direction of breeze indicates a change in the season
> New flowers will now blossom and the song of the nightingale will be heard less and less.
>
> Old faiths will dwindle and die on account of religious reforms.
> There will be a new Kaba and Western statues will be idols.
>
> (Akbar)

> Beyond the stars there are still other worlds;
> There are other fields to test man's indomitable spirit.
> Not devoid of life are these open space
> There are hundreds of other caravans in them as well.
>
> (Iqbal, tr. M. Sadiq)

This was a deviation, although healthy in spirit, from the basic erotic tradition of the *ghazal*, which had, to a great extent, determined the aesthetic sensibility and lyrical character of this form.

It was in the hands of Hasrat Mohani (pseud.: Fadhl Hasan, 1875–1951), Fani Badayuni (pseud.: Shaukat Ali Khan, 1879–1941), Asghar Gondavi (pseud.: Asghar Husain, 1884–1936), Jigar Muradabadi (pseud.: Ali Sikandar, 1890–1960) and a host of other poets that the renaissance of this form was nurtured. Keeping intact the classical structure and imagery they infused in the *ghazal* form, a new sexual outlook on love and beauty and new views of joy and pathos, revolt and protest, in short, hundreds of moods, reactions and reflections. Progressive poets like Majaz, Jazbi, Akhtar Ansari, Faiz, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Parwez Shahidi, Ghulam Rabbani Taban and Jan Nisar Akhtar also enriched this form by rendering social and political themes with a freshness of imagery. The last two took to this form, as their main media of expression, quite late in life, discovering in it scope for fuller and more eloquent expression of their creative genius and keen aesthetic sense.

Firaq Gaurakhpuri (pseud.: Raghupati Sahai, b. 1896) and Yaganah Changezi took the *ghazal* to new heights of poetic expression. Yaganah and Mirza Yas (pseud.: Vajid Husain, 1884–1955) move in a limited area of experience and emotion but their rational and realistic approach towards life is unsurpassed. Firaq, on the other hand, while retaining the classical base of the *ghazal*, expresses through it his rich, varied and colourful aesthetic experiences, bringing the *ghazal* closer to the genius of ancient Indian culture with his imagery and language. His *ghazals* are an expression of the thrill and wonder, pathos and pity which the sights of the world around excite in him.

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Among the poets of the younger generation who made sincere efforts to enrich the *ghazal* with modern sensibility, the names of Hasan Naim, Bani, Shaz Tamkanat, Krishna Mohan, Makhmoor Saidi, Shahryar and Basheer Badr should be mentioned. Their originality of thought and feeling and their freshness of expression, brought to the Urdu *ghazal* a keen sense of contemporary awareness. Hasan Naim is so devoted to the *ghazal* that he has established the 'Ghazal Academy' in Delhi to popularize this form of poetry among younger poets, readers and listeners of modern Urdu verse.

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Section 5

DRAMA

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Introduction

KAMALADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY

Indian literature, no matter in what form, is composite in character reflecting a large concourse of varying influences, even while each region has its own special form, style and imagery as its distinguishing feature. But all these varied strands make a recognizable composition. This multiphased multilingual nature of our culture is emphasized in our ancient books. *Ṛgveda*, for instance, says 'Many people speak many languages'. Similarly the Indian epics are a never-ending panorama of diverse social groups, with different coloured skins, varied physical features and psyches, diverse habits and customs—a magnificent study in contrast. We have to remember that language is a social fact and that its content is deeply related to the life of the community. For literature draws its inspiration and sustenance, in short, its materials, from real life, to be funnelled into coherent reading matter. What is unrelated, divorced from the pulsating currents of everyday life, proves purposeless. This is the crux of the relationship between language and literature. Language is a cultural phase determined intrinsically by the radius of its birth and evolution and the immediate elements that operate around it: historical, social, economic. Words are but the arteries through which the blood stream of ideas flow to coagulate into recognizable forms and images to trace the design that we term style. Behind the words is the inspiration, the quintessence of a way of life, called by the sophisticated term 'culture'. This is hard to describe, for it is woven from a million coloured strands of tradition, memories filled with images, song and verse, legends and myths, fable and local romances, experiences drawn from the core and substance of the daily existence of the people, their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, sweat and tears; and added to these are the superb gifts of nature, the refulgent landscapes around, above all the storehouse of nature with its undiminishing treasures to draw upon.

It is these elements that have crept into the creative forms, be they witty sayings, proverbs, riddles, fables, stories, discourses, songs, dances, culminating in drama, the summit of man's achievement as it were. These outer manifestations were the outpourings of the common people, indigenous creations of the ordinary men and women, an integral part of the flow of their everyday existence, but not away from the mainstream, seeking rhythm, colour, harmony, out of the flow of their own being and of the nature around. A veritable world of aesthetics emerged from this, a world of unhurried living, with that sense of timelessness and spacelessness, the inextricable characteristics of the Indian tradition.

It is this base and background that provides a single identity to Indian aesthetics and therefore to literature. It is particularly so in the field of drama. Often when we watch dramatic performances, no matter how far flung the region of their origin, how different the language, the Indian hard core is recognizable. It were as though they are the offspring of a single parent.

The common factor is not only the popular myth or the favourite epic, it is even more

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the basic philosophy, the sense of values, providing reality to the sense of timelessness and spacelessness. This is as much a physical as a metaphysical experience. A Hanuman carrying a mountain lightly is as real as a crane lifting an uprooted house into a truck for transportation; Siva and Parvati flying overhead watching human scenes on the ground is as real as looking down at a city from a flying jet.

An incontrovertible presence in the Indian literary background is Sanskrit. Even if all the regional languages do not trace their origin to this giant, all of them have inevitably been affected, some moulded, others influenced, by its very vastness, its immense parameters, its almost limitless vocabulary and wide variety of expression. It has, however, to be remembered that in spite of its weight and status, it obviously did not smother the regional shoots coming up and attaining full bloom. One must also presume that the power and influence of such a highly developed phenomenon as the Sanskrit drama would have a definite impact on the regional ones. In fact, one might confidently say that the reign of the Sanskrit drama enriched that entire period. It is no wonder that far from cringing under the shadow of the Sanskrit drama, other language dramas shone and flourished. It should also be remembered that from the earliest times, other languages besides the main regional, had flourished alongside, further expanding thereby this linguistic panoramic scene.

Deeply rooted in all peoples, at all times, is the love of the theatrical. The various theatres gradually took on definite shapes, built around rituals, festivals and temples. Again, though each was individualistic with special marked characteristics, they all had equally recognizable common features. There is the use of the body for communication, inseparable in Indian music, dance and drama. A drama in action is a combination of all these three along with the spoken word. Equally indispensable and recognizable are the theatre properties such as masks, costumes—including headgear, ornaments to cover every part of the body. Their shapes and the materials used in their make-up may vary, but they are *Indian*. The details may vary, but in their totality, they are part of a single tradition sharing the inner core and often the theme: the various *Līlas* (dance dramas), the *kathās* (narration accompanied by song and sometimes dance) and the *yātras* (*jātras*). Then there are full-fledged dramatic forms going under the blanket term 'folk', yet each locale with its own individual structure is built on the tradition of the locale or the region. They are too many to be enumerated. But they, one and all, conform to one pattern which in western parlance is described as the Total Theatre. What marks the Indian production as distinctive is the quality of the inspiration that flows as vocabulary. In a performance this is conditioned directly by the outer manifestations. The words and the music, or the words and the dance are like the two sides of the same coin. The words are closely related to the melody and the movements of dance. They are not abstract, but fully impregnated. Equally so with the drama. It is even more intriguing and unpredictably surprising in oral folk-plays where the dialogues are improvised as the action moves along. For drama is but the reflection of life, working out the relationship between individuals, and as also between individuals and the community.

The Total Theatre is the inevitable form any community activity must take. The early Indian community was a closely knit one and its functioning was largely in unison. Singing, dancing and acting are rooted in functions. That is what made the hardest of labour light and joyous, be it digging, sowing, harvesting, carrying loads, driving herds and cattle. So with rituals and festive celebrations. It is these deeply sunk experiences that passed into local ballads, *kīrtans*, *kathās*. Then they were woven round local heroes, and local deities (*grām dēvatas*) until they flowed into the larger classics.

Periodically, there have been great emotional upsurges, some strongly interwoven with spiritual elements, like Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Vaishnavism, Saivism, each with its myriad offshoots, flowering into its own aesthetic forms, including literature, for all these are closely interlinked. Periodically, there have also been patriotic upsurges, all through our history, that have given birth to passionate outpourings, contributing to virile verses, song, dance and drama.

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The Indianness in our performing arts also comes from the feel of our perception and from relating it to action through physical expression, thereby communicating an inner felt experience. In literary terms, the inspiration or the inner experience is known as *rasa* and the physical form it takes, as *bhāva*. The rich sources, from which inspiration was steadily drawn, have already been described. As these sources were common to people all over the country, the same tints coloured, the same aroma flavoured the infinite manifestations, which account for a continued unity, even in an apparent medley.

For a period India's identity began to be clouded while she was in political bondage. In fact, one can say that the test of the regaining of one's freedom would be the recovery of that personality. As the passionate struggle for India's freedom filled the air, it inevitably re-lit the inner fires of creativity, revived fading images, injected new vigour into concepts that had dimmed into shadows.

The amazing truth is that this traditional heritage of ours had not really died. However faded, discoloured, distorted some expressions may have grown, they lay like live coal under the ashes, waiting for that regeneration that our ancestral faith believes in. This also proved how deep their roots lay embedded in the hearts and heads of simple folk.

One very significant fact that has contributed to the richness of our cultural heritage and its continued survival is that all sections of our society contributed to this wealth, and everyone at every level, no matter how lowly, caste differences notwithstanding, was equally involved in keeping the cultural cycle moving. India should consciously and gratefully remember its deep debt of gratitude to the socially underprivileged and economically deprived, but for whose unswerving faith and unabating devotion, we would have been tragically poorer.

The current cultural revival is fairly all-round, touching most performing arts. While many new dramas are being written largely round the social tensions and economic imbalances, there is an equally welcome turning to our old stories, the earthy folk scenes, and above all the classical Sanskrit dramas. After playing around with *avant-garde* models, and pale copies of the West, there is a serious effort to strike out on our own. Cutting across the strident air of the angry rebels, is a movement to provide a new fare for the jaded, worn down by the heavy tensions of some of the present-day writings. They are modern plays but presented with a touch of folk fantasy or the flavour of Sanskrit. Sometimes even Sanskrit classics are offered, without the old sober formalism, but shot through with a fresh vitality, the contours reinforced as it were with an innate aesthetic feel, more compact in their dimension to suit the current tempo and modern audiences. Scenes from the epics are dramatized, keeping to the traditional background but within new parameters and devised differently. Thus, while the authenticity of the period is maintained, the mood is moved closer to the viewers with that sense of intimacy which an improvised folk-style rouses. These innovations offer a welcome relief from the strident tensions of the genre called 'modern' plays. In the new theatres, even a battle scene is toned down even when it is rough and fierce, by *describing* it instead of enacting the clash, bustle and destruction.

Many new drama writers have been influenced by the folk and the classical and are stirred to introduce attractive and meaningful elements in the current, as an antidote to the complexities and anxieties which are an inevitable part of today. There seems to be a new search for the Indian identity, which is not necessarily confined to old tales or traditional classics. It is but a natural desire to pull out some of the old treasures that were perhaps casually set aside under the advent of new arrivals from foreign lands. There is a healthy assimilation of the *deśi* and the foreign. A Brecht play is presented in typical folk-style and nobody even guesses it is foreign; or a Shakespeare is shown in *Yakṣagāṅa* framework, proving as powerful as the original. Thus Indian dramatists have developed their art, using sophisticated and conservative techniques of representation.

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Assamese

SAILEN BHARALI

Introduction

Drama in Assam has a religious origin. The recorded history of the Assamese drama begins with the plays of Sankardev (Śaṅkaradeva, 1449–1568), the great thinker and reformer who wrote plays mainly as a means of promoting the cause of Assamese Vaishnavism. The plays of Sankardev are popularly known as *aṅkīyā nāṭs* (*nāṭas*), or *aṅkas*, which means dramatic compositions in single acts. These *aṅkīyā nāṭs*—the staging of which is known as *bhāonā* (*bhāvanā*)—had a profound influence on the social, cultural and educational life of Assam. They contributed not only to the growth of the popular stage but also to the development of music and dancing in Assam. It was again these plays which led to the creation of a special kind of poetry known as *bhatimās* (hymns) as well as to the emergence of Assamese prose.

Before Sankardev, there were some popular folk-dramatic entertainments in Assam such as *ojāpāli* (choric dance), *putalā nāch* (puppet dance) and *dhulīā* (drummer) performance, which are still to be found in the villages but which are gradually decaying for want of patronage. These folk-dramatic institutions might have given Sankardev his basic ideas for writing the *aṅkīyā naṭs*. The choric singing of *ojāpāli* is said to have contributed greatly to his plays. The *ojāpāli* party usually consists of four or five singers. The master or leader of the party, who is called the *ojā* (upādhyāya), recites verses from the scriptures to the accompaniment of gestures, while his assistants, called *pālis*, repeat the verses and provide accompaniment with cymbals and keep time with their feet. Occasionally, the *ojā* moves about the stage or the arena in rhythmic style and explains the verses in a dialogue with his chief assistant, who is called the *dāinā pāli*. The occasional conversations between the *ojā* and the *dāinā pāli* and the dramtic gestures and movements of the *ojā* throughout the performance make *ojāpāli* a semi-dramatic art form.

The Growth of Aṅkīyā Nāṭ

Sankardev appears to have improved the institution of *ojāpāli* and given birth to classical Assamese drama. He was a great Sanskrit scholar, as is evident from his outstanding works, and though his plays grew mostly out of the indigenous material, the influence of Sanskrit drama is also recognizable in them. Sankardev's plays follow the techniques of Sanskrit dramaturgy in the performance of preliminaries (*Pūrvaraṅga*), which constitutes an integral part of the *bhāonā*, in the use of Sanskrit *ślokās* and *nāndī* verses which open the play, and in the introduction of the role of a *sūtradhārā* to guide and conduct the play. The functions of the *sūtradhārā* are, however, more akin to those of the *ojā* in an *ojāpāli* than to the *sūtradhārā* of the Sanskrit drama. The *sūtradhārā* of the *aṅkīyā nāṭ*, unlike his Sanskrit counterpart, remains on the stage from the beginning to the end of the performance. He not only recites the *nāndī* and explains the purpose of the play but also introduces the characters, announces their entrances and exits and fills the gap in the action of the play by singing, dancing and narrating those parts of the story which cannot be exhibited on the stage. The role of the *sūtradhārā* is, therefore, very important in an Assamese *bhāonā* as he performs the functions of a director as well as a commentator. It is consequently essential for him to be a talented person proficient in music, dancing and acting.

Since the *aṅkīyā nāṭs* were written to popularize Vaishnavism, the emphasis naturally was on their religious themes rather than on their literary or artistic qualities. Plot, characterization and other requisites of drama were subordinated to the main objective of rousing bhakti (devotion) in the audience. Although there are some differences between the plays of Sankardev and those of his contemporaries in the use of *nāndī*, Sanskrit *ślokās* and *bhatimas* (devotional songs), the sentiment expressed is the same in all of them. To heighten that effect, an artificial language used

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in Krishna devotion and known as Brajabuli—Assamese mixed with Maithili—was used in the plays. For the same reason, a sustained lyrical note was maintained throughout the plays. In fact, one of the most important characteristics of the *aṅkīyā nāṭ* is its essential lyrical nature. Song and verse occupy the major portion of the play, and dialogue, (which is introduced merely to elaborate in prose the lyrical sentiments), not only plays second fiddle but is itself highly rhythmical. It is the fervour of the lyrical poetry which has made *aṅkīyā nāṭs* a spectacle of drama and lyric.

Sankardev wrote six plays between 1518 and 1568. The plays are *Kāliya-damana*, *Patnī-prasāda*, *Kelī-Gopāla*, *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa*, *Pārijāta-haraṇa* and *Rāma-vijaya*. Sankardev drew his inspiration mainly from the Bhagavata, excepting for his last play, *Rāma-vijaya*, whose story is drawn from the Ramayana. He has not deviated from the original sources in these plays but has only added some minor incidents here and there to produce local colour and the necessary effect. The plays are noted for their depth of understanding, power of observation and poetic beauty. Before writing these plays Sankardev is believed to have arranged a dramatic performance known as *Chihnayātrā* with painted scenes of the 'Seven Vaikunṭhās' (Seven Heavens). But the play has not been recovered so far and nothing more about the play is known. The biography of Sankardev by Ramacharan Thakur, however, reveals that it was a pantomimic show for which Sankardev himself painted the scenes on the *paṭa* (sheets of paper), trained dancers, made masks and prepared stage accessories suited to the divine characters.

The favourite disciple of Sankardev was Madhavdev (Mādhavadeva, 1489–1596), who owed complete allegiance to his *guru* (master) and did whatever his *guru* directed. Like Sankardev, Madhavdev was also a great literary genius whose *Nāmghoṣa*, a book of a thousand couplets, is regarded as one of the outstanding works in the devotional literature of Assam. Madhavdev wrote five plays: *Cordharā*, *Pimparā Guchuvā*, *Kotorā Khelovā*, *Bhuṣaṇa-Herovā* and *Bhumi Lutivā*. There are a few more plays which are attributed to him, but their authorship is still a matter of controversy. The plays of Madhavdev have been called *jhumurās*. It is difficult to say precisely why they have been thus termed. Madhavdev did not write his plays exactly on the lines of those of Sankardev and presumably it is because of this that the term *jhumurā* is applied to them. According to some scholars, *jhumurā* means a short one-act drama in which songs supply the whole plot. Be that as it may, the plays of Madhavdev have some special characteristics which distinguish them from those of Sankardev. They are shorter and more musical in content; they are lighter in theme and wider in appeal. While Sankardev was concerned with the *dāsya* (servitude) mode of bhakti, Madhavdev's interest was in the *vātsalya* (filial) mode, with the child Krishna as the focus. Incidents from Krishna's childhood have been presented in his plays in a way that reveals the eternal nature of the child in the boy Krishna, and they are psychologically penetrating and artistically absorbing.

Of the playwrights who followed Sankardev and Madhavdev, Gopal Ata (Gopāl Ātā, 1547–1611), Ramacharan Thakur (Rāmacaraṇa Ṭhākura, 1521–1600) and Daityari Thakur (Daityāri Ṭhākura, 1564–1627) are well known, though, with the exception of Gopal Ata, who has to his credit three plays based on the Bhagavata-Purana, the other playwrights have not exhibited a mastery of the art. Their plays are more or less imitative works, lacking in freshness. The tradition of writing *aṅkīyā nāṭs*, however, continued right into the 19th century. But the religious austerity and the artistic quality of the early dramas dwindled into decadence towards the closing years. The playwrights paid more attention to making the plays popular entertainment than to their didactic purpose or craftsmanship. Just as some of the successors of Shakespeare wrote plays with scenes of horror and excitement in them, in order to gain cheap popularity, these playwrights also introduced sensational and artificial elements into their plays, although the chief aim of the *aṅkīyā nāṭs* was not lost altogether.

Modern Assamese Drama

With the coming of the British, after the Yandabu pact of 1826, the modern period in Assamese literature begins. But in the first years of the British occupation, Assamese and its literature suffered a great setback. The British, with little idea of the local language and influenced by people recruited from outside the region, withdrew Assamese from the courts and the educational institutions and imposed Bengali. It was only the efforts made by a few American missionaries, with the assistance of some local talent, that led to the restoration of the Assamese language.

The history of modern Assamese literature is the history of the new growth under the impact of western literature and education. In the beginning, however, the impact was realized only through Bengali. But with the publication of the journal *Jonākī* (1889) from Calcutta, by a few youngsters who had gone there for higher education, direct contact was established. The influx of new ideas as a result of western literary influence brought about radical changes in Assamese literature. Drama took a completely different turn in form and content. Previously there was only one type of drama, the *aṅkīyā nāṭs*. Now dramas of several types, tragedies, comedies and plays with a number of acts and scenes, were written. Whereas the plays of the *aṅkīyā* type were religious, the new drama was humanised in the social sense. While the *aṅkīyā nāṭs* were poetic in mood, the new drama was action-oriented and conflict was its soul. The inspiration for the new drama was mainly Shakespeare and such Shakespearean conventions as the introduction of

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subplots, mixing the tragic with the comic, and the use of soliloquies and asides were followed almost mechanically by all the Assamese playwrights. Several Shakespearean dramas were translated and adapted, starting with *Bhramaraṅga* (1888), a translation of *The Comedy of Errors*, which was rendered in prose, and local colour given both to the action and the characters. *Bhramaraṅga* was followed by translations of *As You Like It* (*Candrāvali*, 1910), *Macbeth* (*Bhīmdarpa*, 1918), *Cymbeline* (*Tārā*, 1915), *Troilus and Cressida* (*Tarun Kānchan*, 1932), *Othello* (*Rañjit*) *Romeo and Juliet* (*Amar Līlā*, 1918), *The Taming of the Shrew* (*Dandurīdaman*, 1932), *The Merchant of Venice* (*Banij Konvār*, *Venicar Sāud*, 1946), and *King Lear* (*Aśru Tirtha*, 1932). These plays, however, were not as successful on the stage as *Bhramaraṅga*. There were also translations from Bengali. But since these plays were never printed, it is not possible to give details about them.

The foundation of the modern Assamese drama was laid by Gunābhirām Baruā's (1837–95) *Rām-Navamī* (1857), a social tragedy written on the theme of widow remarriage. The play is primarily western in technique, but certain devices of Sanskrit dramaturgy, such as the role of the *sūtradhāra*, have been introduced. It should, however, be noted that although the history of modern Assamese drama started with a social play, the number of serious plays written in the early years was few. The reasons for this are not difficult to find. Audiences in Assam were accustomed to the *bhāonā* tradition and had yet to develop that social consciousness which is required for the growth of social plays. Naturally, they found it difficult to appreciate a play loaded with serious social problems. Moreover, up to the beginning of the 20th century, there was no difference in Assam between rural and urban society. A separate urban society had yet to develop. Therefore, the problems of the modern society, which are mainly the results of urbanization and which have attracted the attention of later playwrights, did not demand serious attention at the time.

In such a milieu serious social plays could not flourish and light comedies and farces held the early stage. Among these light plays, mention should be made of Hemchandra Barua's (Hemcandra Baruvā, 1835–97) *Kānīyār Kīrtan* (Revels of the Opium-addict, 1861), dealing with the evil effects of opium, Padmanath Gohain Barua's (Padmanāth Gohāṁī Baruvā, 1871–1946) *Gāonburā* (The Village Headman, 1897), dealing with the miserable life of a village headman under the British administration, Durgā Prasād Majindār Baruā's (1872–1928) *Maharī* (The Clerk, 1893), about the miserable life of an ill-paid clerk on a tea-garden, Rudra Rām Bardaloi's *Bangāl Bangālanī* (1871), based on the illicit love between an Assamese woman and an outsider and Lakshmi Nath Bezbarua's (Lakṣmī Nāth Bejbaruvā, 1868–1938) *Lākāi* (Servant, 1890) whose theme is the humour of situational incongruity. The number of light comedies and farces increased considerably in the early part of the 20th century and those who made significant contributions to their development are Lakshminath Bezbarua, Padmanath Gohain Barua, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Mitradev Mahanta, Padmadhar Chaliha, Surendranath Saikia, Binanda Chandra Barua and Kumud Chandra Barua.

Serious plays dealing with socio-economic problems are a recent development, particularly after Independence. But a few social and romantic plays written in the pre-Independence period are worth mentioning. Beṇudhar Rājkhowā's (1872–1955) *Seutī-Kiran* (1894), a romantic tragedy, shows the marked influence of Shakespeare's *Othello*, with the character of Seuti being modelled on Desdemona. Lakshmidhar Śarma's (Lakṣmīdhar Śarmā 1898–1936) *Nirmala* (1926) is a propaganda play based on the theme of widow remarriage. The most notable playwright of the period is Jyotiprasad Agarwala (Jyotiprasād Āgarwālā, 1903–51) whose *Kārengar Ligirī* (The Maid of the Court, 1937), revealing the conflict between old and new ideas, is a masterpiece of its kind. Although the action is set in medieval surroundings, the play has a universality about it through its symbolic style of presentation. The story is about Prince Sundar who does not wish to marry in spite of the repeated requests of his mother and friends. He believes in the freedom of the mind and is against social conventions. Under social pressure, however, he marries Princess Kanchan, only to learn that the Princess is in love with Anangaram, a friend of his. Sundar, to right the wrong, hands over Kanchan to Anangaram in a very unsympathetic manner. But this is interpreted as having been prompted by his secret love for Sewālī, a palace maid. The Queen Mother banishes Sewālī. But when the Prince learns of this injustice, he races to the girl's rescue. Sewālī, who loves him and wishes to free him from the consequences of doing something against popular opinion, commits suicide. Although the play has a prince and princess as characters, the problem dealt with is a commonplace human one. Each one of the main characters is a symbol. Sundar represents the new revolutionary outlook and the Queen Mother, the old tradition. Sundar also represents a man in conflict with his environment. *Kārengar Ligirī* is noteworthy for its poetic quality, clear characterization and realistic technique. Jyotiprasad's *Rūpālīm* (1936), which is set in an imaginary north-eastern tribal environment, is another romantic tragedy with excellent character portrayal. But his *Labhitā* (1948) is a play set against the political background of the 1942 movement with the social side assuming greater importance than the historical. The courage and patriotism exhibited by the village girl Labhita and her pathetic social life are revealed in a deeply moving way.

Although the number is not large, some poetic and symbolic plays were also written during this period, the most significant of them being Parvati Prasad Barua's *Soṇār Soleng* (Golden Utopia, 1919), a play that reminds

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us of Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird*. *Lakṣmi* (1931) is another play by the same author. Other plays of this type are Kamaleswar Chaliha's (Kamaleśvar Calihā, b. 1904) *Dhūli* (1930), *Bāsantir Abhiṣek* (1939), jointly written by Kirthināth Bardalai and Muktināth Bardalai, *Luit Konwar* (1930) and *Meghāvalī* (1952).

The two main sources from which the dramatists drew their material before Independence were mythology and history, both of which could supply ready-made material with all the requisites necessary to satisfy the tastes of the people. The common people who formed the audience were deeply attached to the two epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and could easily comprehend the meaning of plays based on the familiar episodes of the two epics. Another factor which contributed to the popularity of the two sources was the romantic attitude of the Assamese writers of the time, almost all of whom were influenced by the romantic movement. The romantic attitude of looking back to the past, therefore, made them seek their ancient heritage and past glory. The most important factor, however, was the growth of national consciousness. With the growth of the idea of liberating the nation from a foreign power, the patriotic sentiments of the writers took over and they began to consider it their duty to remind the people of the nation's glorious past. The rousing of such national sentiment among the masses contributed to the success of the Freedom Movement.

Mythological Dramas

The first mythological play of the modern period is believed to be *Sītāharaṇ* (Abduction of Sita), written by Ramākānta Choudhury (1846–1889) towards the end of the 19th century. The play is not available now and therefore little is known about it. But Pūrṇakānta Deva Śarmā's *Hariśchandra* (1893) and *Haradhanubhaṅga* (1893) were important steps in the development of the modern mythological drama. They were followed by Deva Nath Bardalai's *Baidehī-bicched* (1901), Durga Prasad Majindar Barua's (1872–1928) *Bṛṣaketu* (1877) and *Gurudakṣinā* (1901), Benudhar Rajkhowa's *Durjyodhanar Ūrubhaṅga* (1901) and *Dakṣa-Yajña* (1908), and Chandradhar Barua's (1874–1961) *Meghanād-badh* (1904). Of all these plays the most significant is *Meghnād-badh* (The Killing of Meghanad) whose plot is taken not directly from the Ramayana but from the Bengali *kāvya* on the same theme by Madhusūdan Dutta. The influence of Madhusudan Dutta is discernible not only in the plot construction but in the characterization as well. The play, written in flexible blank verse, is notable for its developed characters, lively dialogue and balanced structure. Two other plays by Barua—*Tilottamā Sambhava* (1929) and *Rājarṣi* (1937)—are, however, not as well-knit as his earlier one. Durgeswar Sarma (1885–1961) has written two mythological plays—*Pārtha-Parājaya* (1909) and *Bālibadh* (1912)—which are based on episodes in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana respectively. An attempt has been made in these plays to create dramatic situations by introducing certain incidents that are products of the playwright's imagination.

Indreswar Barthakur's (1887–1960) *Śrivatsa-Cintā* (1927), Kamalānanda Bhaṭṭāchārya's (1894–1951) *Avasān* (1936) and *Citrāṅgadā* (1956), Ānanda Candra Baruā's (b. 1905) *Bisarjan* (1933) and *Nala-Damayanti* (1934), Padmanath Gohain Barua's *Bāṇrāja* (1933), Daṇḍi Nāth Kalitā's (1890–1955) *Agni-parīkṣā* (1937), Ambikāgirī Rāychaudhuri's (1885–1967) *Jayadrath-vadh* (1961), Kāmākhyānāth Ṭhākur's (b. 1897) *Beulā* (1933), Mitradev Mahanta's (b. 1894) *Baidehī Biyog* (1950) and *Balichalan* (1946), Surendra Nāth Śaikiā's *Karṇa* (1949) and *Lakṣmaṇa* (1949), and Lakṣyadhar Chaudhurī's (b. 1915) *Rakṣkumār* (1952) are some of the other plays in which mythological themes have been faithfully rendered as drama. Ganesh Chandra Gagoi's (Gaṇeścandra Gagoi, 1910–38) *Śakuni Pratiśodh* (1929) has both literary and technical merit. The most important play of the period is, however, *Śonit Kumvarī* (Princess of Sonitpur, 1925), by Jyoti Prasad Agarwala. The focus of this play is not mythology but a romantic episode. In fact, it is a romantic comedy based on a legendary episode involving Uṣā and Aniruddha. Agarwala, with his sound knowledge of the stage, adopted in this play a more naturalistic technique and gave detailed stage-directions. He also innovatively used Assamese songs in it to enhance the dramatic effect. These lyrical contributions have added much to the beauty of the play. Atul Chandra Hāzarikā (b. 1906) wrote a number of plays paying greater attention to the demands of the stage than to literary virtues. *Narakāsur* (1930), *Beulā*, *Nandadulāl* (1935), *Kurukṣetra* (1936), *Rāmchandra* (1937) and *Rukmiṇī-haraṇa* (1949) are some of his mythological plays. In all these plays, written in blank verse, Hazarika has followed the mythological episode faithfully, though he has introduced certain incidents here and there to provide popular entertainment and create a local atmosphere.

Historical Dramas

Padmanath Gohain Barua's *Jaymatī* (1900) is the first historical play in Assamese. It is the tragic story of Princess Jaymati who was tortured to death by the Ahom King Lararaja when she refused to disclose the whereabouts of her husband. There are two other plays on the same theme—Lakshminath Bezbarua's *Jaymati Kumvari* (1915) and Dandi Nath Kalita's *Satīr Tez* (1931). A special feature of these plays is the introduction of Naga characters to enhance the dramatic effect. The girl Dālimī, introduced by Bezbarua in *Jaymatī Kumvarī*, is the best of the Naga characters. Dālimī, depicted poetically as the daughter of nature is Bezbarua's immortal creation. She is like Words-

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worth's Lucy—pure and simple and quite ignorant of the cruelties of the human society.

Gohain Barua has written three other historical plays dealing with the Ahom rule—*Gadādhar* (1907), *Sādhanī* (1910) and *Lāchit Barphukan* (1915). In all these plays, he has recorded history faithfully, making no attempt to throw any new light on the past. Besides *Jaymatī Kumvarī*, Bezbarua has written *Cakradhvaj Singha* (1915), dealing with the Ahom-Moghul struggle during the reign of Chakradhvaj Singha, and *Belimār* (Sun Set, 1915), which centres on the repeated Burmese invasions that led to the loss of Assam's independence. Bezbarua has shown originality in all these plays by introducing subplots and creating secondary characters. The plays demonstrate the considerable influence of Shakespeare; the character of Gojpuria in *Cakradhvaj Singha*, for instance, being modelled on Falstaff; and Bhumuk Bahua, in *Belimār* resembling Shakespeare's Fool. Nakul Chandra Bhuyan's (Nakulcandra Bhūñā, 1895–1962) *Badan Barphukan* (1927) and *Candrakānta Siṁha* (1931) are also based on the Burmese invasions and the downfall of the Ahom ruler of Assam. In both plays the playwright has not deviated from history at all so far as the main plot is concerned, but has taken some liberty with the minor characters and the subplots.

Of the four historical plays of Daibachandra Talukdar, *Bāmunikowar* (a name meaning Prince of Brahmin woman 1929) dealing with the conflict between the Ahoms and the Chutias, is noteworthy. Its theme is revenge and, consequently, a gloomy atmosphere pervades the play. There are two other plays which deal with themes based on revenge. They are Prasannalāl Chaudhuri's (b. 1902) *Nīlāmbar* (1933) and Kamalananda Bhattacharya's *Nagākowar* (1936). The first deals with the fall of the Kamatapur Kingdom and the second with the valour and patriotism shown by Nagakowar, the son of a banished Ahom princess. In *Nīlāmbar* the plot has been treated seriously from beginning to end with no attempt being made to relieve the horror of the theme. The admitted influence of Shakespeare's *Othello* is to be found in the character of Nanda, who is a creation of the dramatist himself. Nanda, like Iago, secretly devises crude plans to achieve a treacherous end and is the cause of the tragedy that befalls the main characters, including Nīlāmbar. *Nagākowar*, too, is a long play with a large number of horror scenes.

The playwrights who looked beyond the frontiers of Assam history for material for their dramas are Pajiruddin Ahmed and Atul Chandra Hāzarikā (b. 1906). Ahmed's *Gulenār* (1924) tells a sad story of love in King Akbar's time. Hazarika's other historical plays include *Chatrapati Śivājī* (1947), *Kanauj Kumvarī* (1933) and *Tikendrajit* (1950). While the first two are about events in Indian history, the last is about the extraordinary courage and patriotism of a Manipuri youth who attempted to drive the British out of Manipur. Other historical dramas of the period are *Bidyāvatī* (1918) and *Pratāpsiṁha* (1953) by Śailadhar Rājkhowā (1892–1968), *Mulāgābharu* (1924) by Radhakanta Handique (Rādhākānta Handīk. 1880–1952) and *Śarāighāt* by Binanda Chandra Barua (b. 1905).

Post-war Trends

There have been a number of changes both in the form and content of the drama after the Second World War and, more particularly, after Independence. The mythological and the historical plays of pre-Independence days almost disappeared and an era of social plays began. The dramatists may have been inspired by Jyotiprasad Agarwala who effected a revolution in Assamese drama even before Independence and modernized it, but the change was inevitable. The reasons for this are not difficult to find. The blows of war fell heavily on the people and the established values of life collapsed. There were, thereafter, many changes in the social and political life. The attainment of freedom for which the people had fought so long did not satisfy their hopes and aspirations when it finally came. The new freedom, they found, was confined to political life alone. Economic freedom, much more important, was still a distant cry and, in fact, the economic condition of the people started deteriorating. Other problems arose out of this, such as economic inequality and social injustice. And a disappointed people consequently felt they could no longer derive inspiration from the lessons of history. The problems which they faced in their day-to-day lives had no relevance at all to those reflected on the stage in the presentations of old mythological stories. So they now sought a more realistic representation of their lives, reflecting their willingness to fight the social evils and bring about changes in the existing social order. There were, of course other reasons as well for changes in the dramatic trend. With the growth of science and technology people developed new attitudes towards the world. The reality of material benefits and new values of life had their impact on literature. As a result, the dramas that were written after Independence developed some distinct characteristics. The marked tendency in these plays was towards realism and economy. The conventions of Shakespearean drama followed for so long were now ignored. It is difficult to even divide these plays into the categories of tragedy and comedy. They are not even the mixture of the tragic and the comic found in Shakespearean drama. They are, no doubt, serious plays having the problems of contemporary society for plot; but they cannot be categorised. Most of these new plays have three acts, with very few scenes in each act; in fact, in some of them, this traditional division of plot into acts and scenes has been completely ignored. Devices such as subplots, episodes and light scenes, as used by the romantic dramatists, have been virtually done away with. Soliloquies and asides, considered unrealistic and undramatic by the modern critics,

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have been abandoned. To create a natural atmosphere in some of these plays, elaborate and detailed stage-directions have been provided. Thus a new kind of drama, with innovations in form and content, has heralded a new era in the Assamese dramatic world.

But despite the dawn of this new dramatic era, historical drama did not disappear altogether; only the number became quite negligible and even these few had a modern outlook. The first signs of change appeared in *Monirām Devān* (1948) by Probin Phukan (Prabīṇ Phukan, b. 1912) and *Piyali Phukan* (1948) by Nowgong Nātya Samiti written immediately after Independence. The change was more apparent in plays like *Rājdrohī* (1956) by Abdul Mālik (b. 1919) and *Jerengār Satī* (1962) and *Barrajā Phuleśvarī* (1971) by Uttam Barua. An attempt was made in these plays to re-interpret history in a way that fitted with the new social outlook. In *Rājdrohī*, for example, Satram, the villain of history, has been depicted as a leader of the common man and an advocate of democracy. In *Barrajā Phuleśvarī*, Phulesvari, the domineering and power-loving queen of history has been shown as a woman who stood for the cause of the common man and against the high-handedness and autocracy of the Ahom rulers. Thus, even historical plays were influenced by the new social awareness. The general trend, however, was to write social plays based on contemporary social problems. Girish Chaudhury (b. 1927), Lakshyadhar Chaudhury, Phaṇī Śarmā (1910–1970), Sāradā Bardalai, Sarbeswar Chakravarty, Prabin Phukan, Satya Prasad Barua (b. 1919), Anil Chaudhury (b. 1922), Amar Pāthak and a few others were some of the playwrights who realistically presented these social problems. In plays like *Minā Bazār* (1958) by Girish Chaudhury and *Nimilā Aṅka* (1961) by Lakshyadhar Chaudhury, the economic inequality prevalent in society and the economic hardships of the lower middle class family have been clearly revealed. Saradakanta Bardalai's *Pahilā Tarikh* (First Day of the Month, 1956) is another realistic presentation of the economic crisis of the lower income group. Phani Sarma's *Kiya?* (Why?, 1961) draws a similar picture of an artist who, in spite of all his efforts, could not save his son for lack of money. Amar Pathak's *Interview* (1956) was an attempt to reflect the problems of unemployment faced by educated youth. Plays like *Magrībar Ājān* (1948) by Saradakanta Bardalai and Kṛṣṇānanda Bhaṭṭācāryya, *Chirāj* (1967) by Phani Sarma, *Sāko* (The Bridge, 1968) by Prafulla Barā, *Bhaiyāmar Sendurīā Āli* (1952) by Janārdan Ṭhākur and *Jinti* (1962) by Arun Sarma (Arūṇ Śarmā) have been written to strengthen unity between Hindus and Muslims and the people of the hills and plains.

Recent Experiments

The plays we have referred to are sufficient to indicate the social consciousness that was a preoccupation of the dramatists. But mere representation of problems as they are is not enough if social change is to be effected. An indication of how change can be brought about should also be given. This the playwrights have failed to do. Another limitation is that these plays merely depict material reality, no attempt has been made in them to go deep into problems and strike at the very roots. At a time when the chief characteristic of modern world drama is its inwardness, the Assamese playwrights appear to have confined themselves to surface reality.

We are living in an age which has witnessed extraordinary developments in the field of knowledge. Psychology, anthropology and psychoanalysis have given clues to many new truths. A modern writer is not expected to shut his eyes on these developments. These new areas of knowledge have influenced western drama considerably since 1940 and made it more intellectual and thought-provoking. The Assamese playwrights, during the fifties, did not care very much for these new movements in the West. The scene has, however, changed during the sixties and the impact of the forces working abroad has been felt in Assamese drama. Those who have attempted to link Assamese drama with the latest trends in the West are Arun Sarma, Arup Chakravarty, Ratna Ojā Himendra Barthākur, Mahendra Barthākur and a few others. The three plays by Arun Sarma—*Śrī Nibāran Bhaṭṭācārya* (1967), *Puruṣ* (1964) and *Āhār* (Food, 1971) are worth mentioning. In these plays familiar themes have been presented in an unconventional dramatic form. Two of them, *Śrī Nibāran Bhaṭṭācārya* and *Āhār*, mark the influence of the Theatre of the Absurd, a dramatic movement that developed in the West after the Second World War. *Śrī Nibāran Bhaṭṭācārya* depicts the frustration of an artist who dedicated his whole life to the cause of drama. He has already written and staged as many as 12 plays but without any response from the public. Then, at the age of 59 he makes a grand attempt to stage his 13th play and leaves no stone unturned to draw as many people as possible. As he goes before the microphone to read out his beautifully printed welcome address and the curtain opens on opening night, Nibaran Bhattacharya finds to his utter surprise that he is addressing an empty hall. The disillusioned artist nevertheless goes on reading his address, then moves towards the broken platform and falls from it to his death. The repeated failures of Nibaran obsess him and provide the absurd situations in the play. The last scene of *Śrī Nibāran Bhaṭṭāchārya*, when Nibaran speaks before an empty hall, reminds us of Ionesco's *The Chairs*.

The characteristic features of the absurd drama, viz. apparently unmotivated actions, illogical and meaningless dialogue, etc. are more prominently seen in *Āhār* which narrates this story: The dead body of a woman is stolen from the morgue of the medical college hospital by four young men. They are waiting for an opportunity to bury

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under the North Brook gate, an old gate of the city. of the four men, one is a poet-cum-lover, the second a householder, the third a revolutionary and the fourth a drunkard. As they engage themselves in some irrelevant talk, the dead body comes alive and reveals its identity to them. This at once takes the four young men back to their past when each of them had associated with a different type of woman. As soon as they return to reality, they prepare to bury the corpse. But policemen intervene. The plot appears unconvincing, but it is the imagery which is the focus of interest here and the importance of the plot is in the meaning conveyed through it. The corpse of the woman represents woman in all her variety in society. Woman is looked at differently by different people and this is what is reflected through the different attitudes to life of the four young men. Another play *Mṛgatṛṣṇa* (Mirage, 1973) by Basanta Saikia (Basanta Śaikīyā) can also be categorized as Theatre of the Absurd. In this play, a dream situation has been staged in the way Ionesco has done in some of his plays. These plays are, no doubt, innovations in the Assamese dramatic world; but they cannot be appreciated by the common man and their appeal is limited to a few.

Various aspects of the change in social life have been presented powerfully by some writers. Ratna Oja, Himendra Barthakur and Mahendra Barthakur are three of these playwrights who attempted to change the thinking of the audience. Ratna Oja, in some of his plays, has adopted Brechtian techniques. But his plays are yet to be published. He has also tried to experiment with play forms like street drama, which have been initiated by western dramatists in the last twenty years. Himendra Barthakur's serious play, *Bāgh* (Tiger, 1972) inspires young people to fight against social corruption and to come forward to form a healthy, progressive society. It is a challenge to kill the tiger which is the symbol of the hindrances in the way of social progress. *Janma* (Birth, 1976), by Mahendra Barthakur, is another play with a similar powerful theme.

There are several other Assamese plays which have embraced other aspects of social life. They have been written not only as full-length plays but also as radio plays and one-act plays, both of which have registered a prolific growth-rate after Independence. The establishment of All India Radio at Gauhati, in 1948, contributed to the growth of radio plays whose popularity has even threatened that of full-length plays. One of the best, and earliest, in this genre, is Bina Barua's (1910–1964) *Abelār Nāṭ* (Drama of Bald-Day, 1955), about the conflicts of ideals. He has been followed by a host of writers including Prabin Phukan, Dhireswar Barthakur, Arun Sarma, Tafajul Ali, Phani Bardoloi, Atul Bardalai and others.

Translations and adaptations have also played a very important role in the development of contemporary Assamese Theatre. At one stage, they were so numerous that some people were accused of producing only translations and adaptations. During the last two decades, plays from different parts of the world have been translated and performed on the stage. Most of these plays are still unpublished and therefore it is not possible to discuss them in detail. For the same reason it is not possible to discuss the important translations of the period, which include Ibsen's *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck* and *A Doll's House*, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, *Arms and the Man* and *The Doctor's Dilemma*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Oedipus Rex*, Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, Priestley's *An Inspector Calls*, Ionesco's *The Lesson* and *The Chairs*, Camus' *Caligula*, Chekhov's *Strike* and *The Bear*, Hofton's *Dear Departed*, Moliere's *Tartuffe* and *The Miser*, Lorca's *The House of Bernada Alba*, Sartre's *Man Without Shadows*, Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. There are translations from Bengali and other Indian languages as well. They include Badal Sarkar's *Ebong Indrajit* and *Bāki Itihāsa*, Utpal Dutt's *Farrāri Fauz* (all Bengali), Dharmavir Bharati's *Andhā Yug* and Mohan Rakesh's *Āṣāḍ kā Ek Din* and *Ādhe Adhūre* (all Hindi) and Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* (Kannada). All these plays have been successfully staged.

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Bengali—Phase I

PABITRA SARKAR

Modern Bengali drama has roots in the emergence of the English theatre in Calcutta[1] as well as in the introduction of western education in Bengal. The former staged plays for viewing, while the newly-established English schools and colleges offered them as class texts. Both provided an impetus for the future Bengali drama and planted in the heart of the Anglicized Bengali a desire to develop a theatre of his own. This, however, was a typical 19th-century occurrence. Before all this took place, Bengal had various forms of traditional theatre that failed to contribute significantly to the growth of the new drama.

The Traditional Modes

Foremost among what we can call the traditional modes of Bengali theatre is *Jātrā*, a form with an unbroken history from the 16th century, and it is still thriving, having undergone, over the centuries, transformations that have made it almost a new form.[2] The basic features that distinguished *Jātrā* were that it was non-secular, unstructured, in the sense that it was no more than a loosely joined train of scenes in which the main characters bandied songs[3] (prose dialogue was introduced much later) for dialogue. It had several allegorical characters, the most prominent being that of *Viveka* (conscience). It was, and still is, played in a circular ground area with the audience sitting around. It was the Bengal Vaishnavas led by Chaitanya (Caitanya, 1486–1533) who first gave *Jātrā* a definite shape out of the amorphous song-dance-puppetry forms of theatre that must have existed earlier. The *Kṛṣṇa-Jātrā* or *Kāliya Daman Jātrā* which thus came into existence, was, in a way, a theatrical counterpart of non-Vaishnavite *Maṅgala-Kāvyas* (propitiatory poems) which depicted the exploits of a 'sect divinity', Caṇḍī or Manasā for example. Later the other sects (Śāktas mostly) tried to catch up by evolving *Caṇḍī Jātrā* and *Manasār Bhāsān Jātrā*, but they could not compete with either the power or the popularity of the Vaishnavite *Jātrā*.

Secularization of *Jātrā* took place some time around the late 18th century, with the adaptation of Bharat Chandra Ray's (1712–60) *Vidyāsundar* (c.1748), a saucy narrative of palace love and intrigue, only tenuously hooked to a *Maṅgala-Kāvya*. This secularization and some other vulgar conventions that had arisen over the years did finally prove to be *Jātrā*'s bane and in the early decades of the 19th century, the middle-class educated elite, or the *bhadraloks* of Calcutta became thoroughly disenchanted with it. *The Reformer* of 5 January 1832 speaks of 'the gross, barbarous and obscure performance of *Cobbies* and *Jātrās*'.[4] Rajendralal Mitra (1822–91), the orientalist scholar, refers to *Jātrā* as a 'repulsive perversion of drama'. So, in spite of some heroic and temporarily popular efforts of men like Gobinda Adhikari (1798–1870), Krishnakamal Goswami (1810–90) and Nilkantha Mukhopadhyay (1841–1902), to extricate *Jātrā* from the clutches of bad taste, it gradually became a part of the subculture of the non-elite and virtually moved out of the ken of the English-educated city-dwelling middle class.

The other traditional entertainments which required some acting either belong to non-dramatic arts like the *Kīrtan*, or to localized folk or rural forms with little dramatic literature to boast of, or to ritualistic or sect dances like *Bāul*, *Gājan*, *Gambhirā*, etc.[5] But their contribution to the modern Bengali drama has been nothing to speak of.

The Beginnings

The indigenous dramatic tradition of *Jātrā* having already acquired a bad name, was largely ignored and sidetracked by the new dramatist and he sought his models elsewhere. *Jātrā* went on to flourish in exile, and had enough vitality to live, change, accept influences from, and influence in in turn the new Bengali drama, finally to stage a great revival in the early sixties of this century. And although it is still looked down upon by the 'class' audience, *Jātrā* now is, for all practical purposes, the major and the most organized and opulent show business undertaking in West Bengal. The new Bengali drama[6] took off from another platform and began a parallel theatrical tradition.

The first play in Bengali, an adaptation from English was something of a freak. A Russian adventurer, Gerasim Stepanovitch Lebedeff (1749–1817), took it upon himself to produce a play for the 'natives'[7] who had no theatre of their own. He therefore adapted parts of *The Disguise*, a comedy by M. Jodrell,[8] to put it on stage on 27 November 1795. But this play, later lost,[9] contributed very little to the emergence and growth of the new Bengali drama and must be classed as a historical curiosity now.

The following factors ultimately led to the appearance of the new drama: (i) a vacuum in the entertainment component of culture caused by the lack of interest in *Jātrā* shown by the educated elite of Calcutta, (ii) parallel instances of 'clean' entertainment offered by the English stage in the city, (iii) the example of the English plays available as educational texts to be read, recited and acted out.

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latter as classroom exercises, and (iv) establishment of theatres for English plays by some affluent Bengalis in Calcutta, of which the Hindu Theatre of Prasanna Coomar Tagore (1801–68) was the most famous. Other such 'theatres' were soon to follow.

All these factors combined to impel the educated Bengalis of Calcutta to have plays in their own language that would be comprehensible, and therefore would appeal to, a vastly wider audience. Private stages, playthings of the rich, however temporary and transient, were therefore established and these, while putting on occasional plays in English, awaited the first modern Bengali drama to make its debut.

All the three dramatic traditions—the English, Sanskrit, and indigenous *Jātrā*—did in fact provide models for the earliest attempts, although the last was the least important. The Vidyasundar theme, popular in *Jātrā*, was adapted for a stage production in 1835, and was promptly abandoned. English and Sanskrit models (plays of Shakespeare and Kalidasa more than others) had first been realized as translations and adaptations, as though the aspiring new playwright was feeling much too timid to venture into something original.

The first two original Bengali plays were published in book form in 1852. Of the two, *Kīrtibilās* by G. C. Gupta can claim special attention. For, besides being the first original play, it was also the first attempt to write a tragedy in Bengali and the erudite author took great pains to underscore the fact. The other play, *Bhadrārajun* by Tara Charan Sikdar, employs dramatic structure which is familiar in the West. But this is about all the distinctions they have, and they were never performed.

Translations of Sanskrit plays, on the other hand, easily found their way to these stages. Bidyotsahini, Belgachia, Jorasanko and Pathuriaghata were the four most famous 'theatres' that offered several such plays in translation. However, the next original play, *Kulīn-Kula-Sarvasva* (1854) by Ramnarayan Tarkaratna (Rāmnārāyaṇ Tarkaratna, 1822–86) is not a product of any such 'theatre', but was written for prize-money offered by a newspaper. With this play commences the long tradition of topical plays and also that of the social satire in Bengali. Tarkaratna's subsequent plays, of which *Nabanāṭak* (1866) was the most successful, were written for the stage. He also begins the tradition of the puranic plays with his *Rukmiṇī-Haraṇ* (1871) and *Kaṁsa-Badh* (1875), which became extremely popular later with the Bengali audience.

There was, in fact, much in the contemporary scene that called for dramatic treatment. Various social and intellectual conflicts were in the air, issues were being raised, debated and settled among intellectuals as well as amongst the masses. And above all, there was the new awareness that drove to judge and re-evaluate the old institutions in terms of norms and ideas newly received from the West. So widow-hood, the problem of multiple wives that resulted from it, widow remarriage, intemperence, concubinage, excesses of the Young Bengal group, the lust of religious pretenders, and behavioral ethics in general became apt themes for a number of plays,[10] all vying with each other in the rush for catching the popular fancy, but only a few succeeding. Among these, *Bidhabā-Bibāha Nāṭak* (The Drama of Widow Remarriage, 1856) by Umesh Chandra Mitra deserves mention. Most of these plays are farces, masquerading as satires. The Russian Lebedeff had discovered for us the native's excessive preference for the farcical. The lesser playwrights in the second half of the 19th century must have had the same reading of their audience's mind and vigorously wrote farces to tickle them, while pretending that they were doing the society a service.

Between 1852 and 1872, two powerful playwrights stand out; while a third, Manomohan Basu (1831–1912), also attracts our notice: they are Michael Madhusudan Dutta (1825–74) and Dinabandhu Mitra (1829–74), both Basu's worthier contemporaries. All three, according to individual predilections, succeeded in meeting the demands of the time, and, at the same instance, in finding personal themes that showed their skills to the best advantage. Of them, Dutta was most individualistic and independent as an author, and preoccupied himself with larger questions of human existence. His two farces (both in 1859), *Ekei ki Bale Sabhyatā*? (Is This What is Called Civilized Manners?) and *Buṛo Śāliker Ghāṛe Ro* (A Cat is Known by its Whiskers) dwell on the excesses of the college-educated and 'enlightened' young men of the day, and the rebuff met by promiscuous overtures of an aged landlord whose high pretensions of Vaishnava religiosity was equally matched by his weakness for feminine charms. Both are excellent creations, the influence of Moliere in the latter notwithstanding. But the two reveal how briefly Dutta did succumb to the more frivolous aspect of his *zeitgeist*. His other plays carry a serious import. Of these, *Śarmiṣṭhā* (1859) and *Padmāvatī* (1860) end happily after the heroes and heroines have gone through various ordeals, but *Kṛṣṇa-kumārī* (1860) and *Māyākānan* (The Magic Garden, 1874) both have a tragic *denouement*. *Māyākānan* is his last and grimmest play in which Dutta dispenses with scenes of comic relief the preference for which had hampered the tragic intensity of his preceding play, *Kṛṣṇa-kumārī*. He was the first Bengali playwright to show remarkable concern for his art, and he improved his skill with every new play. Dinabandhu Mitra had a weak dramaturgy, but a stronger social concern. He was, however, more at home in farce that had a touch of pathos, as his *Sadhavār Ekādaśī* (fig. Grass Widows, 1866) shows, but the history of modern India will remember him as the author of his first play, *Nīl Darpaṇ* (The Mirror of the Indigo-Planters, 1860), which, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in another context, exposed the oppressions and exploitations of the white indigo planters in Bengal. The play voiced the popular resentment so successfully that the planters and

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their supporters were thoroughly discredited in the eyes of the world. As a play, *Nīl Darpaṇ* is far from being perfect, but as a play of protest it is one of the best we have. Its success on the stage so encouraged a group of amateurs from north Calcutta that they pooled their efforts to establish a public stage in the city, which led to the establishment of the National Theatre in 1872. The Bengali playwrights' preference for several deaths in a domestic tragedy may also be traced back to *Nīl Darpaṇ*. Mitra's other plays, *Navīn Tapasvinī* (The Young Recluse, 1863), *Biye Pāglā Buṛo* (Old Man Crazy for Marriage, 1866), *Kamale Kāminī* (Maiden on the Lotus, 1873) and *Līlābatī* (1867) are of little consequence.

While both Dutta and Mitra did borrow touches from English and Sanskrit sources, their lesser contemporary Manomohan Basu sought Indian classical literature for his themes and adhered to *Jātrā* for his form. In this regard, his is the first attempt to maintain the continuity of the indigenous dramatic tradition. But his plays, whether puranic in theme like *Rāmābhiṣek* (1867) and *Satī Nāṭak* (1873), or social satires like *Praṇay Parīkṣā* (The Test of Love, 1869) show little progress in the form of the art.

The Public Stage Period: 1872–1912

The first 'public' theatre (in contradistinction to the 'private' theatres that prevailed so far) in Bengal, the National Theatre,[11] was established in 1872. Soon after its birth, it went through several changes, but continued using the plays of Mitra, Dutta and Tarkaratna which constituted almost the whole of its repertoire. Some adaptations of currently popular novels of Bankim Chandra and the 'epics' of Dutta and others were also included in the fare. The next year, 1873, saw the establishment of the Bengal Theatre which introduced actresses for the first time. The National Theatre, later called the Great National, followed suite next year. Since the first actresses of the theatre were prostitutes, this innovation of introducing actresses made a large section of the Bengali elite dissociate themselves from the theatre, although they were quite keen on its development both as a worthwhile pursuit and as a vehicle for inculcating high ideals of reform and regeneration. As the cream of the Bengali intelligentsia began avoiding the public stage only the second grade or lesser talents remained. This was responsible for the comparatively poor standards of development of Bengali drama.

At its inception it looked as though the National Theatre was going to grow into an institution that would serve the patriotic efforts of the educated Bengali middle class, still nebulous, romantic and directionless, but pronounced in their resentment against the oppression of foreign rule. This it did only in part, offering at the same time popular farces, comic operas, parodies, pantomimes and extravaganzas. Important playwrights, of course, were loyal to the demands of the time, and Jyotirindranath Tagore (Jyotirīndranāth Ṭhākur, 1848–1925), Rabindranath's elder brother, responded to his age first with a farce, *Kiñcit Jalayog* (Light Snacks, 1872) making fun of the Brahmo excesses of the Kesab Sen School, and then wrote a few serious plays in which Indian history is romanticized for patriotic purposes. Two of these plays, *Sarojinī* (1875) and *Puruvikram* (1878) are adaptations of Racine's plays—so far the only Racine in Bengali, and they, along with *Aśrumati* (1879), another play based on fictionalized history, contain long declamations on the love of one's country. These plays roused the audience to a sense of devotion to the motherland and instilled patriotic zeal in them. Away from the context in which they were first written and produced, they now seem rather stale and inane. In contrast, Jyotirindra's *Alīk-Bābu* (The Fibbing Dandy, 1877), a charming little farce despite its heavy reliance on Molière and Sheridan for ideas of characterisation remains delightful to this day.

Jyotirindra and his contemporary Upendra Nath Das (Upendranāth Dās, 1848–95) are alike in that both came to the public stage for a brief period of hobnobbing and left it soon, although for different personal reasons, and both were popular mainly for their patriotic plays. But while Jyotirindra's portray patriotism as only a lofty ideal placed in environments that were both spatially and temporally remote from the author's own, Das' blood-and-thunder plays, *Śarat-Sarojinī* (1874) and *Surendra-Vinodinī* (1875), for instance, had contemporary themes and contained broad hints of subversion and revolution offered in grossly melodramatic plot-patterns. Rajkrishna Ray (Rājkṛṣṇa Rāy, 1849–94) remained outside this turmoil and followed the *Jātrā* tradition. His operatic plays with puranic themes are forgettable but for one innovation. He was the first to use blank verse in dramatic dialogues in his play *Haradhanu Bhaṅga* (The Breaking of Siva's Bow). This style was later adopted by Girish Chandra Ghosh for his own plays, and he turned it into so powerful and effective a medium that it came to acquire the name, somewhat unjustly, *Girish Chanda* (the style of girish or the girish metre).

The plays that were critical of the British rule and satirized or attacked aspects of it, ultimately led to the promulgation of the Dramatic Performances Act of 1876, a restrictive measure that required prior approval of the script by Calcutta's Police Commissioner before the play could be put on stage. This was, in fact, the culmination of the authoritarian reaction that was set off by *Nīl Darpaṇ*. Plays that were more immediately responsible[13] for the proclamation of this measure were *Cā-kar Darpaṇ* (The Mirror of the Tea-Planters, 1875) by Daksina Charan Chattopadhyay, *Gaykwar Darpaṇ* (The Gaykwar Mirror, otherwise known as *Hīrak-Churṇa*, Diamond Powder, 1875) by Amritalal Basu and *Samudra Darpaṇ* (The Mirror of the Sea,[14] author unknown).

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This Act rendered many earlier plays forbidden on the stage, thus creating a vacuum in the theatre world. This made Girish Chandra Ghosh (Giriścandra Ghoṣ, 1844–1912), the major force in the talented group of actors who set up the National Theatre,[15] step into the role of a playwright. He began with the innocuous forms of the opera and adaptations from other genres. Sukumar Sen[16] arranges Ghosh's career as a playwright into five broadly successive phases, of which the first was that of operas and adaptation. Of the former, *Dol-līlā* (1878), *Māyā-Taru* (1881) and *Mohinī Pratimā* (1881) are mere names now. The second phase in which Ghosh wrote mainly a few purana-based plays like *Rāvaṇ-Badh* (1881), written entirely in the so-called 'Girish Metre', *Abhimanyu-Badh* (1881), *Dakṣa-yajña* (1883), etc. has also little distinction to speak of. The titles *Caitaṇya-Līlā* (1884), *Prabhās-yajña* (1885) and *Buddhadev-Carit* (1887), among others, usher in Ghosh's third phase, that of the Avatār-Messiah plays. *Caitaṇya-Līlā*, replete with *kīrtan* songs, borrowed heavily from the Krishnite *Jātrā*, and made the audience lachrymose in religious ecstasy while the auditorium was turned almost into a Vaishnava shrine. This was the period of the Hindu revival in Bengal, and none could surpass Ghosh in his astuteness for reading the directions that popular sentiments could take. The fourth phase, of the death-infested domestic tragedy, was induced by the big success of *Saralā* (1888) an adaptation of *Swarṇalatā* (1874) by Tārak Nāth Gangopādhyāy (1843–91). Although plays like *Prafulla* (1889) and *Hārānidhi* (1890) of this period were quite popular, the former more than the latter, Ghosh is ill at ease in them since his preferences lay elsewhere. Then, somewhat out of turn, comes his best play *Janā* (1894), a tragedy based on a Mahabharata episode. His fifth and last phase consists of a few 'historical' plays in which history is interpreted from the patriotic viewpoint. These were the tumultuous days of the Bengal Partition (1905–11), and the playwrights appear to be less intimidated now by the Dramatic Performances Act. *Sirājuddaulā* (1905), *Mīr Kāśim* (1906) and *Chatrapati* (1907) are the most representative of Ghosh's historical plays.

When Ghosh wrote his plays in groups of similar themes, he betrayed his tendency to move with the popular taste. Though more often this has been the undoing of his plays, as an actor-manager-playwright he had little independence to do anything else. Sen is right in observing that only about five of his forty-five plays are of any moment. A modern critic would incline to be even less charitable. But he was the best actor of his time, and also the most successful teacher of acting, manager and playwright. One must also admit that he never compromised his ideals in order to be popular, and his eagerness to be swayed by the current taste is always balanced by his equally ardent desire to give it taste a direction to better and loftier goals.

Among playwrights belonging to this actor-manager tradition, Amritalal Basu (1853–1929), Biharilal Chattopadhyay (1840–1901) and Amarendra Nath Datta (1876–1916) were also fairly successful. Amritalal, however, is the only playwright whose appeal still persists, and a couple of whose plays continue to be revived every now and then. We have already mentioned that one of Basu's plays was among the ones that triggered off the processes of the Dramatic Performances Act. His strength, however, lies in farces and satires, though tne situations and language in these often strain good taste. Among his farces *Til-Tarpaṇ* (1881), *Kṛpaṇer Dhan* (1900) and an adaptation, *Cāṭujje-Bāṛujje* (Chatterji versus Banerji, 1893), from English, are the better ones, and from among his satires (once again farces in disguise, often with a lesson or moral), *Bivāha Bibhrāt* (Muddled Marriage, 1884), *Sammati Saṁkaṭ* (Consent Crisis, 1891), *Bābu* (Dandy, 1893), *Boumā* (The Daughter-in-law, 1896) and *Byāpikā Bidāy* (Departure of the Shrew-1926) have stronger claims to be remembered. Basu, in his plays at least, takes a reactionary stance to criticize the excesses of the 'moderns', including the Brahmos, but some of his humour is still amusing.

Two Professional Playwrights. D. L. Ray (Dvijendralāl Rāy, 1863–1913) and Kshirodprasad Vidyabinod (Kṣirodprasād Vidyābinod, 1863–1926) both took up writing of plays though they had other, and more prestigious, careers. Neither was associated with the theatre in the way Ghosh and others were. Ray started with burlesques and farces, of which *Viraha* (1897), otherwise undistinguished, is enjoyable for its humorous songs. He however soon made a turn-about and found his forte in serious and sentimental plays, first in purana-based *Pāṣāṇī* (1900) and *Sītā* (1902), and then in highly diluted 'historical' plays like *Nūr Jāhān* (1907), *Mewār Patan* (The Fall of Mewar, 1908), *Śāh Jāhān* (1910) and others. Both purana and history to Ray are old bottles into which he liberally pours the modern notions of the right of the individual, equality of women, patriotism, etc. His historical tragedies oversimplify the moral conflicts of Shakespearian plays and his flowery and absurdly over-done dialogues make canting melodramas out of whatever tragic potential his historical plays might have had. A sample of this style is given here from the speech of Kalyani, an estranged Hindu wife whose husband has become a Muslim in his play *Mewār Patan*:

> Do you know who is the superior wife? She is none but the one who worships the feet with which her husband has kicked her, one whose devotion does not destroy in separation, shrink from neglect, diminish in cruelty, nor is it ever resentful of disappointment. She is the one whose devotion is placid like the moon in the darkness, immovable in storm like the mountain, still like the pole-star in the revolution of heavenly bodies. She is the one whose loyalty is ever and in every situation, limpid like

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trust, profuse like kindness, even-handed like mother's love. (tr.)

Vidyabinod's diction was much weaker, and even pedestrian at places. But he had an easy command over the funny and the pathetic. He achieved his early success with romantic operas and plays with Mid-Eastern themes. The unfamiliarity, and therefore the romantic appeal, of his plots is certainly the chief attraction of these plays. Of these, *Ālibābā* (1897) and *Kinnarī* (1918) were both very successful. His puranic plays are redeemed by the play *Naranārāyaṇ* (1926), which successfully captures part of the tragedy of Karna in the Mahabharata. His historical plays are, once again, reconstructions and reinterpretations of history, with currently popular sentiments of patriotism (*Baṅger Pratāp Āditya*, Pratap-Aditya of Bengal, 1906 or *Palāśīr Prāyaścitta*, Plassey Redeemed, 1906) and Hindu-Muslim unity (*Ālamgir*, 1921), etc. thrown in.

The other Playwrights between 1913 and 1944. Though a thoroughly different kind of dramatic spirit and convention had been introduced by Rabindranath in his plays, the public theatres in Bengal carried on till 1930 with plays that were either written by the notable authors of the Girish era, or with plays that dutifully imitated theirs. Highly romanticized and recreated history, maudlin devotion of the worshipper, song-and-dance extravaganzas and operas and reinterpreted puranic and historical stories constituted the more popular fare, not excluding the domestic tragedy with a surfeit of death. Aparesh Chandra Mukhopadhyay (Apareścandra Mukhopādhyāy, 1875–1934) was another actor-manager whose *Karṇārjun* (1923) was a runaway success on stage, more for the *deus-ex-machina* scenes that it contained. Jogesh Chandra Chowdhury (Jogeś Candra Caudhuri, 1886–1941) also wrote several puranic, historical and social plays, all vehicles for ideas that were currently fashionable, be it the puranic *Sītā* (1924) or historical *Digvijayī* (The Conqueror, 1928) or the social *Nandarānir Saṁsār* (Nandarani's Household, 1936). It goes to Chowdhury's credit that Sisir Kumar Bhaduri (1889–1959) the first modern actor-producer of Bengal, started his campaign for a changed theatre with his *Sītā*, otherwise a poor play. Other popular playwrights who were successful on the professional stage and outside it with one or more plays were Nisikanta Basu-Ray, Jaladhar Chattopadhyay (1900–64), Rabindra Nath Maitra (1896–1932), Bidhayak Bhattacharya and Banaphool. Maitra's comedy *Mānmayī Girls' School* (1932) is notable for the marks of deviation from tradition.

Three more playwrights are worth mentioning of whom Sachindra Nath Sengupta (Śacindra Nāth Sengupta, 1892–1964) and Manmatha Ray (b. 1900), were quite popular playwrights of the professional stage. Two of their more important plays, *Kārāgār* (The Prison) by Ray and *Gairik Patākā* (The Saffron Flag) of Sengupta appeared in 1930. In the former, the legend of Krishna has been made a vehicle of patriotic and revolutionary fervour, and in the latter, history has been put to similar use. This is in the tradition of Girish Chandra Ghosh and his immediate followers. Ray's one-act plays are the first attempts in Bengali in the genre, and Sengupta's highly sentimental *Sirājuddaulā* (1938) raises the pitch of patriotism to such a level that it is still popular with the non-elite audience. Both the authors, as the others of their time, suffer from the thematic and stylistic hangovers of the Ghosh-Ray-Vidyabinod school. Only Pra(matha) Na(th) Bi(si) (b. 1904) leaves the much-trodden paths and offers comedies and light-hearted satires of which *Ṛṇaṁ Kṛtvā* (1935), *Ghṛtaiṁ pivet* (1936) and *Moucāke Ḍhil* (Raising the Hornet's Nest, 1938) are still popular with the amateurs outside the group-theatre movement.

The Evaluation. But for Tagore, who found a personal dramatic style and convention in 1908, Bengali drama of the period under discussion is rather poor. Most of the plays of this period, except for a handful, were good as *pièces du theatre*, but as literature they are disappointing. This is the period in which the 'national' theatre slowly transformed itself into the 'professional' and 'commercial' theatre. The demands of the audience in either were not very high, so far as dramatic art was concerned. The playwright was, therefore, under no compulsion to care about the permanent literary merit of his creation. The emergence of great actor-producers like Bhaduri did not create a single dramatist of any calibre. Tagore's glory was achieved outside the professional fold. This fact, and the later development of the 'group-theatre movement' which generally gave a wide berth to the public theatre are themselves enough condemnations of the latter. This is not to say that the plays mentioned in this article are not popular any more. Quite the contrary. The amateur groups, specially the 'office-clubs' still prefer the melodramatic and sentimental fare that most of these playwrights trundled out. The best that could be said about the crop of plays of this period is that they always remained close to the moods of the people, and mirrored their dreams, aspirations and ideals to the best of their ability.

NOTES

1. Roychowdhury, S. (ed.), *Bilāti Jātrā Theke Swadeśi Thiejāter* (in Bengalī), Jadavpur University, Calcutta, 1971.
2. Sarkar, P., '*Jātrā*: The Popular Traditional Theatre of Bengal' in Coppola *et al.* (ed.), *Journal of South Asian Literature*, vol. X nos. 2-3-4. 1975, East Lansing, pp. 87–107.
3. The *Gīta-Govinda* could be regarded as a perfect prototype of the earlier *Jātrā* and this shows that, rather than being a new form altogether, *Jātrā* probably preserves a continuity of earlier dramatic

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tic traditions. Keith (A. B. Keith, *The Sanskrit Drama*, London, 1924, p. 40) has followed Schroeder in pointing out the *Jātrā*-like features of the *Gita-Govinda*.

4. Quoted in Moitra, Suresh Chandra, *Bāṅglā Nāṭaker Bibartan* (Evolution of the Bengali Drama), (in Bengali), 1973, Calcutta, p. 193.
5. For brief discussions of these dance forms see Banerjee, Projesh, *Folk-Dance of India*, Allahabad, 1944.
6. The four Bengali plays collected from the Court Library of the Nepal king (published by the Vangiya Sahitya Parisad in 1917) hint at a different tradition of writing Bengali plays modelled after those of Sanskrit, but no continuity could be reconstructed from this isolated group of plays.
7. Although professedly intended for the 'natives', the major part of the audience were the English settlers in Calcutta. This is perhaps why the English stage owners of the city, fearing competition, offered stiff resistance to Lebedeff's theatrical forays and finally made him abandon his activities in this area. See Roychowdhury (ed.), op. cit. p.7.
8. Actually Richard Paul Jaddrell (1745–1831), as identified by R. K. Das Gupta in an article in 1961.
9. Madan Mohan Goswami has restored a copy from the Moscow Archives, and has published it under the title *Kālpanik Sang-Badal* from Jadavpur University in 1963.
10. One scholar has listed 505 such plays that were printed between 1854 and 1899. See Goswami, J., *Samājcitre Unaviṁśa Śatābdir Bāṅglā Prahasan* (19th-Century Bengali Farces as Portrayals of Society), (in Bengali, Calcutta), 1974.
11. Records have it that Dacca in Bangladesh had a public stage a little earlier, but this stage has no relevance to the growth of the new Bengali Drama.
12. Bandyopadhyay, Dr. Rabindranath, *Bāṅglā Nāṭya Niyantraṇer Itihās* (History of Restrictive Measures on the Bengali Theatre), Calcutta, 1976, for a somewhat loosely organized account of such steps.
13. Pandhe, Premila (ed.), *Suppression of Drama in Nineteenth-Century India*, Calcutta, 1978. The editor quotes official correspondence in which the names of these plays appear recurrently.
14. Sukumar Sen, in his commodious *Bāṅglā Sāhityer Itihās*, vol. 2, (History of the Bengali Literature), 1970, misses the title.
15. A misunderstanding made Ghosh leave the group at the time the National Theatre was established, but he rejoined it later.
16. Sen, op. cit., 1970.

Bengali—Phase II

CHITTAPRIYA GHOSH

Is there, or can there be, a concept of modern Indian drama as distinct from the western type? Can it be modern and specifically 'Indian' at the same time? Sombhu Mitra (Sambhu Mitra, b. 1915), one of our foremost actor-playwrights, answers the question in the affirmative. He takes his cue obviously from Tagore (Rabīndranāth Ṭhākur, 1861–1941) when he thinks that he would like to develop a contemplative kind of drama where 'we come closer to the character and move into his subjective world'.[1] Utpal Dutt (Utpal Datta, b. 1929), on the other hand, opposes the idea with some vigour. Asked to comment on the possibility of such Indianness, he simply declares: 'It doesn't exist.'[2] In his missionary zeal of taking theatre to the people, he propagates a different type altogether: a revolutionary theatre, where instead of too much of contemplation or internalization he would like to have raw action with a definite political attitude.

Social awareness being the dominant feature of the Bengali drama of this century, our playwrights have been vacillating between two extremes in search of a theatre which will belong to the soil. Exploration of myths, exposition of indigenous forms and presenting inner and outer life simultaneously in one action have been the goal of some; while others, in an attempt to ban the word 'art' from their programme, have tried to intervene in contemporary events, to educate the indifferent masses and to change society in favour of socialist democracy. This, in a nutshell, is the history of the hundred years of Bengali drama since 1881, when Tagore staged the first of his musical plays at his ancestral house in Jorasanko (in Calcutta).

Tagore

The Musical Emotion. 'From drama to music should be an easy step for one who writes on Tagore', observed a noted Tagorite.[3] But, perhaps, the reverse is also true. Tagore's first major attempt at anything dramatic has been associated with his experiment in music, which was distinct from the Hindustani abstract modes with his bias for the human, for the individual and the specific.[4] When, after more than a year's sojourn in England, he was contemplating writing a play, 'a cascade of musical emotion was gushing forth day after day, hour after hour;...we wrote, we sang, we acted, we poured ourselves out on every side.'[5] This was the moment of Tagore's *Vālmiki-Pratibhā* (The Genius of Valmiki, 1881), composed in the prime of his life.

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The form was not exactly an innovation in the context of Bengali drama which was only two decades old at that time. Even a few relatives of Tagore had tried their hands at some sort of operatic plays. But where he easily surpassed them all was in the immaculate projection of various kinds of moods with an articulated musical idiom. Perhaps his European experience of operas at the age of 17 was, to an extent, responsible for the integrity of his work. Herbert Spencer's essay on 'The Origin and Function of Music' was another inspiration. According to Tagore's own confession, Spencer's idea that through the development of emotional modulations of voice man first found music, appealed to him. 'Why should it not do, I thought to myself, to act a drama in a kind of recitative based on this idea?'[6] *Vālmīki-Pratibhā* sprang out of this deliberation.

Tagore himself acted memorably in the pivotal role of Valmiki and the play was hailed as a big promise from a youth of twenty, but it was not long before Tagore rejected the form and changed over to the popularly accepted mode of verse-drama. Was he not conscious that his preoccupation with music might sometimes be a drag on dramatic actions? At least he himself differentiated *Vālmīki-Pratibhā* from *Māyār Khelā* (The Game of Maya, 1888) with the observation that the former was 'a garland of drama with a thread of songs' while the latter 'a garland of songs with just a thread of dramatic plot',[7] a definite retrograde move.

Drama of Action. So, in the beginning, Tagore took a plunge into the drama of action and produced two regular five-act plays with plots and subplots evolving out of the familiar motives of jealousy, revenge, love and hate, with kings and queens, fights and deaths in abundance. But through these well-worn devices he had been able to create a world of his own and at least one of these plays proved to be an all-time success on the Bengali stage. This was *Visarjan* (Sacrifice, 1890).

Apparently the theme of the play is the conflict between religious superstitions and the true religion of man. But this is only a secondary proposition. Raghupati, the royal priest, infuriated by the king's proclamation that animal sacrifice would henceforth be forbidden in the temple, begins to conspire against him, not so much because his deep-rooted faith in the goddess or in the age-old customs has been hurt, but because his priestly authority has been challenged. This is a problem of the ego which, incidentally, is a recurrent theme in most of Tagore's works. An intense conflict between the self and soul, between loyalty and love, has been powerfully depicted in Jaisinha, the adopted son of Raghupati. He is firm in his religious belief, so much so that he can innocently declare: 'Why ask the aid of soldiers? We have the strength within ourselves for the task given to us from above'[8], reminding us of Eliot's Becket, when he cries:

Unbar the door! Unbar the door!
We are not here to triumph by fighting, by
strategem, or by resistance.
. . . . We have only to conquer
Now, by suffering.[9]

Raghupati, in contrast, leans heavily on 'stratagem' rather than on suffering. In fact, he acts on apprehensions that Jaisinha is being torn away from him by the king, by a woman or even by the goddess herself. The king, on the other hand, is ready to renounce all—his knights, his kin, his throne and even his love—for the sake of Truth. Raghupati comes to sense only when, oscillating violently between the two extremes of 'to be or not to be', Jaisinha kills himself.

It should be noted here that Tagore's plays in translation are much different—both in form and content—from the originals. Tagore has dedicated his English translation of *Visarjan* 'to those heroes who bravely stood for peace when human sacrifice was claimed for the goddess of War'.[10] In most of his plays we shall come across these heroes ready to be martyrs in a variety of situations, the claimant not always the goddess of war, there being other goddesses as well. Raghu's daughter in *Prakṛtir Pratiśodh* (Nature's Revenge, 1884), Kumar and Sumitra in *Rājā O Rāṇī* (The King and the Queen, 1889), Supriya in *Mālinī* (1896)—all had to sacrifice their lives, and these sacrifices have always been the highest points of sublimation in Tagore's plays.

Experimental Drama. In *Rājā O Rāṇī* or *Visarjan*, Tagore came very close to the Shakespearian structure. Judging by the standard of Bengali drama prevalent in the nineties of the last century, he had already gained a firm grip on the conventional form. Despite—or maybe because of—this, Tagore stopped writing drama for more than a decade after *Citrāṅgadā* (1892) and *Mālinī* (1896). In these two plays he gradually advanced from verse-drama to dramatic verse, the lyrical being particularly intensified in *Citrāṅgadā*, and then came the sudden lull. The curtain rose again in 1908 with the production of *Śāradotsav* (Autumn Celebration) at Santiniketan opening up new vistas in Tagore's dramatic career.

In a drama where we are no longer rocked by violent or exceptional emotions, 'where life is seen and heard in twilight and in the meditation', Tagore seemingly found his proper idiom. When in an article[11] in 1903 he denounced our proscenium stage and drew our attention to the indigenous *Yātrā* where actors were not placed separated from spectators, he was in fact preparing himself for his future ventures of freeing Bengali drama from a 'vulgar type of realism', as he called it. From *Śāradotsav* onward, Tagore tried to dispense with rigid plots or mechanical divisions of a play in regular acts and scenes, so that it could have fluidity of movement and flexibility of form, and more

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into the symbolic sphere of imagination. The dialogues were no longer set in verse. Subtle prose, a free and deliberate use of songs and symbols, images heaped upon images, spinning and weaving of new dramatic patterns—were the common features of this group of plays, the content of which tended to become more metaphysical than psychological. And herein, Tagore thought (as an Artaud could have thought)[12], lay the essence of Indian drama.

The Tune Itself. The theme of these plays is a search for an identity, aesthetic and social. In a constant struggle between being and becoming, Tagore's protagonists always endeavour to achieve 'the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal'.[13] In order to realize this wholeness of existence, thinks Tagore, one must be in close communion with nature, with his soul and with society at large. Accordingly, the plays of this period can be divided roughly into three groups.

In *Śāradotsav* or *Phālgunī* (The Springness, 1916), there is a celebration of the seasons along with an interpretation of the joy of living. Nature here is not merely a backdrop, it is the vital part of these plays. The plots are thin. In the former play, a young boy works hard during the autumn holidays to repay the debts of his deceased master while his friends frolic around. In the latter, a group of young men on their way to celebrate the spring festival, seek the abode of Death or old age itself, in their bid to overcome it. As for the form of these plays, Tagore has this to say in his prelude (a dialogue between the King and the Court-poet) to *Phālgunī*:

Have you got anything ready to hand? Any
play toward? Any poem? Any masque? Any—
Yes, King. I have got the very thing. But
whether it is a drama, or a poem, or a
play, or a masque, I cannot say.
Shall I be able to understand the sense
of what you have written?
No, King, what a poet writes is not meant
to have any sense.
What then?
To have the tune itself.
What do you mean? Is there no philosophy in it?
No, none at all, thank goodness.
What does it say, then?
King, it says 'I exist.'[14]

A Vision of Life. The second group consists of two of Tagore's best-known plays, *Rājā* (The King, 1910) and *Dākghar* (The Post Office, 1912), where this 'I exist' has been given an elaboration.

The story of *Rājā*, with the universal theme of *la belle et la bête*, has its roots in a narrative in the *Kuśa-Jātaka*. In the original story there is an ugly king with his beautiful queen. In Rabindranath's play the king is dark and terrible, and remains unseen throughout the action. He meets his queen Sudarsana only in a dark chamber, lest it be too much for her to endure his fiery appearance. Sudarsana imagines him to be beautiful. But her conception of beauty being nothing more than prettiness, she is easily enticed by the outward glamour of an impostor, Suvarna, who proclaims himself to be the real king. The King of Kanci, the most sceptical of all the people around who doubt the very existence of a king in the state, sets fire to the palace in a bid to kidnap the queen. It is then that the king comes to her rescue, and this becomes a crucial moment in Sudarsana's consciousness. She comes to know to her utter dismay that her king whom she imagined to be beautiful, is actually 'like the awful night when a comet swings fearfully into our ken—black as the threatening storm-cloud, black as the shoreless sea'.[15] Broken and exasperated, she moves away from the king and leaves for her father's home, closely followed by all the seven kings in chase who want to possess the unattached woman. Once again the king appears to subdue these rebels. The experience finally transforms Sudarsana, and Kanci as well. In humility they now surrender to the invisible king who has opened the doors of his dark chamber at last, and Sudarsana comes to realize that life is 'not handsome', but 'incomparable'.

Dākghar, on the other hand, is built on a simple story of an imaginative boy ailing and waiting for death. This boy, Amal, observes life keenly and identifies himself with everything and everyone he looks upon from his window. When a new post office, the King's Post Office as he is told, is set up, right in front of his home, he is made to believe that there will be a letter for him also:

Amal. Post Office? Whose?
Watchman. Whose? Why, the King's surely.
Amal. Do letters come from the King to his office here?
Watchman. Of course. One fine day there may be a letter for you in there.
Amal. A letter for me? But I am only a little boy.
Watchman. The King sends tiny notes to little boys.[16]

Evidently, the watchman here is only cajoling a little boy. But this is more than enough to stir Amal's imagination. From now on, in his obsession with the king, he anxiously waits for him and feels that the king's postmen are coming down the ages in an eternal journey of time—Life and Beauty being that journey. Surrounded by the matter-of-fact people like the village headman, and with a firm belief in life and love, he dies peacefully.

It is idle to speculate whether this king stands for God or Death or both. The serenity of the action with its lyrical structure does not seem to invite the question, as it does for an embarrassed critic,[17] as to why a boy of Amal's age has to die, in the world of a benevolent God. Here, as Yeats

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said in the preface to the translation of this play, 'the meaning is less intellectual, more emotional and simple'.[18] Its basis is on a realistic level, resting on which we can only say with the aged Fakir of this play (Amal's friend, philosopher and guide): 'My eyes are not young; but you make me see all the same.'[19] *Dākghar* is a drama of this vision; it means a lot only if it can make us see.

The Adding Machine. In the third group of plays, Tagore confronts the problems of organization and regimentation impinging on personality. In plays like *Acalāyatan* (The Immovable, 1912) and *Tāser Deś* (The Land of Playing Cards, 1933), the emphasis is on sarcasm with which he attacks the absurd orthodoxy or the tyranny of custom. But in *Muktadhārā* (Free Current, 1922), *Raktakaravī* (*Red Oleanders*, 1926) or *Kāler Yātrā* (Time on the Move, 1932), the plays written between the two world wars, the author deals with the problems of the state versus the individual, capital versus labour or/and the machine versus the man. The organized passion of greed in modern civilization, observes Tagore, 'assumes a terrific bigness, its physiognomy blurred through its cover of an intricate network, —the scientific system'.[20] In these plays a necessary revolt against this system has been indicated by the uprising of the common citizens or the labourers or the untouchables, all coming from the lower strata of life. In *Muktadhārā* Tagore reveals the impending danger of nationalism that sacrifices humanity to machine, while in *Kāler Yātrā*, there is a positive indication of the leadership of our society passing over to the proletariat.

In *Raktakaravī*, the most complicated and perhaps the most mature of the three plays, we find that people of all classes—the oppressor and the oppressed alike—have lost their identity in a highly mechanized society. For the first time in a Tagore drama quite a few of the characters are identified by their occupational names or ironically by mere numbers, and not by their proper names—Nandini and Ranjan being two notable exceptions. Nandini, a simple and lively village girl has been brought, we realize, to a big township Yakshapuri, inhabited by gold digging labourers, governor, officers, priests, professors and, of course, the king, who is very different from the earlier kings of Tagore. This king, the owner of all the accumulated wealth of Yakshapuri and alienated from his surroundings by an 'intricate network', pours his weary heart out to Nandini, who in her turn loves Ranjan about whom we hear but do not see. The internal suffering begins. There is a parallel action of protests and revolts among the labourers under tyranny, their leaders having been jailed (Biśu) or killed (Ranjan). When the king comes to know that he himself has caused the death of Ranjan without knowing or intending it, he realizes that even he has become a puppet in the hands of his officers who run the system. He, in fact, is being controlled by a machine which he wrongly thought was under his control. The king now comes out of his closed doors, and along with his workers, takes up arms against the system, reminding one of the comparable metamorphosis of the Welsh social reformer Robert Owen.

No More of Catchwords. Very often than not, these plays of Tagore have induced critics to think of western playwrights like Maeterlinck, Hauptmann or Strindberg. Not that such a study in comparison will always prove to be a sterile exercise; particularly, the plays mentioned in the preceding section may draw our attention to the expressionist movement of German drama during the twenties where the degradation of man in an industrial civilization was sought to be traced. But it might be foolish sometimes and misleading always to label these plays (except, of course, a few like *Tāser Deś* or *Phālgunī*) as purely symbolic or allegorical or as an oriental counterpart of the western practice. Even if we may not concur with Tagore's emphatic declaration that Sudarasana (of *Rājā*) was as concrete to him as Lady Macbeth,[21] we should not fail to notice in her the pangs of a human being with all her superficial ambitions and natural inclination to physical beauty. Amal is not a disembodied idea, or merely a new version of Hauptmann's Hannele, he only represents the *man* 'whose soul has the call of the open road'.[22] Nandini is a *woman*, innocent and eager to experience life. Her innocence or her very existence is a mystery to those who have been dehumanized in a modern capitalist system with all its brutal tyranny. She appears to be more of an everyday woman and an individual person than, say, an Agnes—the daughter of Indra in Strindberg's *A Dream Play*. Symbols are surely present in Tagore's plays, but they do not distort reality 'in a dreamy or vague way'[23] as a typical Maeterlinck piece does.

Idea of a Modern Ballet. In the last phase of his life Tagore experimented with a new form in which dance, music and drama fused together. While travelling in Java in 1927, Tagore had the opportunity of seeing her traditional dances depicting well-known stories from the Indian epics.[24] It flashed upon him that acting was nothing but a music of the body, the perfection of which was dance. His dramatic career had begun with a form akin to opera, and here he evolved a sophisticated type of ballet, where to speak was to sing and to act was to dance. The cycle was complete.

Contrary to the natural apprehension that the theme in these dance-dramas might be more abstract than in his earlier works, Tagore here becomes overtly interested in psychological conflict as is shown in *Caṇḍālikā* (1938) and *Śyāmā* (1939). Physical passion has never been presented so poignantly in any other work of his. Syama, for example, is a beautiful courtesan, and can go so far as to persuade an admirer to take upon himself a life-sentence to save a foreigner, Vajrasen, with whom she is infatuated. But when in a moment of ecstasy Syama discloses to Vajrasen the

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price of gaining his freedom, a moral crisis begins. That their love rests upon a heinous crime is apparent to both. It is impossible therefore to live together as also to live apart. The situation assumes a tragic dimension rarely found in Tagore.

And all this has to be expressed on the stage through songs, mimes and dance—a form of dance in which traditional patterns, Indian or non-Indian (Ceylonese, for example)—have been freely synchronized. One enthusiast, who happened to witness an early performance, writes: 'The dramatic cubism of Kathakali, gloriously wedded to the sensitive lyricism of the Manipuri and occasionally punctuated with folk feelings, breathing an aroma of the dreamland.....'[25] When Tagore accepted the task, the challenge obviously was whether the form would be capable of containing modern sensibilities. That it amply did is evident from the exalted reaction of most of the connoisseurs who feel that Tagore had added in these plays 'a depth and a vitality that transmuted them into unique new creations'.[26]

The End of a Lone Fight. But then, critics are not always certain as to where to place Tagore the dramatist in the history of Bengali drama. Their stance has sometimes been ambivalent, and whether it is proper to hail him as the greatest Bengali playwright has often been debated. One of the reasons for this scepticism is that Tagore's plays have hardly been presented on the stage with reasonable success. True, professional theatre has failed to produce him off and on. But does that indicate his failure as a dramatist? Has not the Bohurupee troupe staged *Raktakaravī* with phenomenal success? Bohurupee's production of that play has been looked upon as a milestone in the history of Bengali theatre. The troupe did not limit itself to this single production alone, so far as Tagore is concerned. Plays like *Rājā*, *Muktadhārā*, *Visarjan* and *Dākghar* have also been tried, not to speak of the dramatised version of his none-too-dramatic *Cār Adhyāy*, where the director has been able to bring out the poetry latent in the sophisticated dialogue of the characters. 'Through Tagore we must find a way to express the whole of a man',[27] thought Sombhu Mitra. And he, for one, did find the way.

Utpal Dutt has assured us that 'only after the revolution will the people really claim Tagore'.[28] Meanwhile, one may bear in mind that our modern concepts of an open theatre, little theatre, or the poetry of the theatre, owes something to the lone fight of Tagore's dramatic activities, when his contemporaries exercised in puerility.

After Tagore

The Legacy of the Past. Almost oblivious of Tagore, the playwrights of the thirties of this century mostly accepted the 19th-century norms to be their point of departure, mythical and historical plays being their primary attraction, often a peg on which an author hung his contemporary experience. But the point is, even in an attempt to rouse in us a feeling of patriotism or of communal harmony, the playwrights of the thirties rarely escaped banality of expression while using episodes from the puranas or from history.

One of the reasons of this steep fall has been perceptively pointed out by Buddhadev Bose (Buddhadev Basu, 1908–74), the poet. A cooperation between literature and theatre is absolutely necessary for the growth of drama; but since Tagore's ascendancy in the field, Buddhadev observes, 'there has been an increasing hiatus between the two; literature has grown more and more subtle and daring whereas the theatre has remained crude and conventional, depending much on the players and little on playwrights'.[29] It is interesting to note that in the poetry and fiction of about the same period, the atmosphere was charged with an intoxicating spirit of modernity and vitality. But despite our great actor Sisir Bhaduri's (1889–1959) admirable contribution to the regeneration of the theatre, Bengali drama was lagging far behind. Leaning too much on the public taste possibly had been its nemesis.

Even then, playwrights like Manmatha Ray (b. 1899) and Sachin Sengupta (1892–1961) deserve a special mention here. The preoccupation of the former is with the mythical stories; of the latter, history. It is possible sometimes to read a political meaning in Manmatha Ray's plays. The portrayal of the prison of Kansa in his *Kārāgār* (The Prison, 1930) could be taken as an apt allegory of the situation when our political workers were being imprisoned *en-masse*. But, although the play ends with the submission of a tyrant, one must remember that the author had conceived this Kansa as a tragic hero. Perhaps, politically, he was not too sure of his theme.

The same year Sachin Sengupta arrived with his *Gairik Patākā* (The Brown Ensign, 1930), a play on Sivaji. This play, as also a few others which were to follow, shows his aptitude for a rhetorical oratory, which—though not of any high merit—had a captivating power nonetheless. His *Sirājuddaullā* (1938) is perhaps the most popular of the historical successes to date, thanks to its availability on gramophone discs. Largely sentimental, Sachin Sengupta seemed to have known his audience perfectly well.

Bidhayak Bhattacharya (Bidhāyak Bhaṭṭācārya, b. 1910), yet another playwright of the period, is more interested in social and psychological problems. Not that Manmatha or Sachin had never written anything of the type, but Bidhayak was a little more conscious of the new experiments in the form of drama. With a journalistic approach to a grave social malady, *Biś Bachar Āge* (Twenty Years Back, 1939) and—a much later one—*Kṣudhā* (Hunger, 1957), are two of his many stage-successes.

These are the men who had to play second fiddle to an

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insipid stage, trying to repeat in a slightly modified manner what a Girish Chandra Ghosh (Giriścandra Ghoṣ, 1844–1912) or a D. L. Roy (1863–1913) had done earlier. They served a lot, but one can only lament with Buddhadev Bose: 'Theirs is a laudable martyrdom, and ours a sigh of regret.'[30]

Amateurs Step in. The only few plays of the period which are also readable, have been written by some of our noted novelists who felt drawn toward the theatre, though only for a short while. Tarashankar Bannerji (Tārāśaṅkar Bānerji, Beng. Bandyopādhyāy, 1898–1971) was one of them. He was interested in genuine character study in a decaying feudal society. Although the situations and dialogues are not always dramatically charged, his *Dui Puruṣ* (Two Generations, 1942) and the dramatized version of his novel *Kālindī* (1941) offer us a feel of the soil. The proud yet hollow aristocracy of the landlords miserably facing the rise of a new generation and the coming of a new age was a favourite theme of Tarasankar in his novels, and in his plays he was no different.

Banaphul (pseud. for Balāicānd Mukhopādhyāy, 1899–1979) was another such novelist who wrote a few plays. His emphasis was on the biographical sketches of our 19th-century stalwarts, as in his *Śrī Madhusūdan* (1939) or *Vidyāsāgar* (1942). Banaphul explored these dramatic lives reasonably well, but it is interesting to note that none of his works were accepted by the public stage, in spite of the fact that a different script on the life of Madhusudan had been quite popular with the audience at that time.

This trend of biographical plays will be found later in Narayan Ganguli's (Nārāyaṇ Gāṅguli, Beng. Gangopādhyāy, 1917–70) *Rāmmohan* (1952) or in the plays of Chittaranjan Ghosh (Cittarañjan Ghoṣ, b. 1930) who has taken an interest in the cultural pattern of 19th-century Bengal in reconstructing the lives of Derozio, the 'Young Bengal' reformer of Calcutta, Binodini, an actress of great repute, or Nidhu-babu, a leading composer.

Mention may also be made here of Abanindranath Tagore (1871–1951), the artist nephew of Rabindranath. This exponent of oriental art left his brush aside for almost a decade during the thirties and with the folk forms as his primary source of inspiration engaged himself seriously in turning our epics or fables into scores of dramatized funs and frolics, which he liked to call 'the hysteria of imagination'. True, his works in this genre are mostly for children, but if one is interested in the history of the development of our theatre, one should not pass him by without a grateful acknowledgement. He had declared in unequivocal terms that the proscenium stage was, in fact, a thing of the past.[31] But none took any serious notice of him at all; the theatre-scene in Bengal was content to hold on to a dead tradition.

Resurgence with Hunger. During the forties, however, the professional theatre showed definite signs of decay. The gate money of a Sisir Bhaduri production came down to thirty-seven rupees one night, while the spectators waited in long queues in the neighbouring film houses to watch low-grade Hindi films. A new competition had started. The theatre was empty, the drama scarce.

An exciting resurgence heaved the scene of the Bengali theatre at this juncture. Sane intellectuals all over the world had united in defence of humanity against Fascism and Imperialism. An anti-Fascist and progressive writers' association was also formed in India, which was facing war and famine and riots and all. It was not a long way from the slogan of 'Quit India' to that of 'Ye Āzādi Jhūṭa Hai' (This Freedom is False). This was the perspective when, in July 1943, the first bulletin of the 'Indian People's Theatre Association' (IPTA) declared that 'Old art forms with new and vibrant themes...are again bursting into life.'[32] This was the first time in our theatre movement when an all-India concern became evident in the cultural activities seeking a link between 'the Andhra and Malabar peasant boys,... the Bengal peasantry or Bombay working class.'[33] This concern gave rise to a new group of talents for whom all art was people's art. Bijan Bhattacharya (Bhaṭṭācārya, 1917–78), one among them, created a sensation with his *Navānna* (Celebration of the New Rice, 1944), the production of which indicated the emergence of the 'other theatre' in Calcutta.

Hunger and Epidemic[34] was the name of a dance programme organized by the IPTA in 1944. This was followed by *Navānna*, the theme of which was the same as that of Bijan's earlier play *Javānbandī* (The Evidence, 1943): the anguishes of a peasant family during the man-made famine of 1943. Here we can see the first real peasants in a Bengali drama since Dinabandhu Mitra's (1830–73) *Nīl Darpaṇ* (The Mirror the Indigo-Planters, 1860).

It was perhaps in the scheme of the IPTA that their plays would never end without a note of optimism. The famine-stricken people of *Navānna* rush to the metropolis only to come back having had experiences of hoarders, touts and debauches—and a little of politics. Back in the village, the protagonist waits for the monsoons with this last cry: 'Resistance! Resistance this time!', though for this there is no adequate preparation in characterization or dramatic action. The same is true of his later plays also.

The hangover of *Navānna* is distinct in all of Bijan Bhattacharya's plays, of which particular mention should be made to *Devī-Garjan* (1966–69) and *Garbhavati Janani* (The Expectant Mother, 1969–71). In the former, the conflict is again between the landless peasants and the landowners, while in the latter is manifest the belief-pattern of a group of herb-collectors in a village. These plays have been structured in an epic manner, presenting 'a whole social

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milieu in a deliberately leisurely fashion working through rituals from birth to death.'[35]

Bijan's plays presaged a number of plays and playwrights. *Chenṣā Tār* (The Snapped String, 1950) by Tulsi Lahiri (1897–1959), *Bāstubhiṭā* (The Homestead, 1947) by Digindrachandra Banerjee (b. 1910) or *Natun Ihudī* (The New-fashioned Jews, 1950) by Salil Sen are a few notable examples with portrayals of the economically oppressed and uprooted rural people.

The importance of the IPTA, therefore, can never be minimised even if it started to disintegrate within a couple of years after its inception. Its far-reaching impact will be felt more if we remember that for the next thirty odd years Bengali drama entirely depended on the 'group theatres' (most of the leaders of which had their first training at the IPTA) instead of the professional ones.

Let Roots Have Wings.[36] The fifties and sixties witnessed a steady growth of these groups. But what would they stage? Their social awareness and an apparent sense of responsibility stood in the way of accepting old dishes as such. On the other hand, there were not many new plays ready on hand for a demanding generation. A new trend in Bengali drama developed under the circumstances, its horizon being widened by translations and adaptations from the western masters selected at random.

It was a significantly new orientation for the Bengali audience which came to be widely exposed to the varied worlds of Sophocles, Ibsen, Chekhov, Gorky, Pirandello, Ionesco, Anouilh or Brecht—to name only a few.[37] If the first 15 years of this period were thus dedicated to the West, the second 15 years can be marked with the gradual opening up of a new Indian scene, already latent in the IPTA movement but not quite worked out. Playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar (Marathi: *Śantata, Court calu Ahe*), Girish Karnad (Kannada: *Tuglak* and *Hayvadan*) or Mohan Rakesh (Hindi: *Ādhe Adhūre*) started to be translated and staged with an equal verve. The close association with these writers, particularly with the epic drama of Brecht, has been responsible for a radical change, not only in the production technique of subsequent Bengali drama, but also in the writing of it.

And Wings Roots.[36] Exceptions are there, but the most important playwrights of this quarter of a century have been actors themselves. Sombhu Mitra is a case in point. By far the best actor in our times, Sombhu Mitra has given a definitive shape to our theatre movement by his sense of discipline and rigour, and his ways of interpreting the wide range of life at different levels. He first came into prominence with the production of *Navānna*. A few years later he had to build up his own troupe of 'Bohurupee' with the guidance of Manoranjan Bhattacarya (1889–1954), the veteran actor. But still later, after he became singularly noted for his productions of Tagore and Ibsen, Sombhu Mitra had to ask for something new to exemplify his much-pronounced ideas on Indian drama.

'But who is going to write the drama?' he wondered.[38] In his youth he wrote a couple of plays, not memorable pieces though. Bijan, his friend, was surely one who had secured his roots in the soil depending largely on the rituals and archetypal images. But, perhaps, Sombhu Mitra wanted to have a greater span where the plot would be 'burningly real and yet ethereally transcendent',[39] where the characters would be dealing with fundamental values even in their normal behaviour. In search of this, he himself came out with *Cānd Baṇiker Pālā* (The Play of Chand, the Merchant, 1977), his *magnum opus*, which he took at least ten years (1965–75) to complete. Nothing more elegant have we read in Bengali drama since Tagore.

The story of Chand, exploited by many modern writers, is the most popular story in pre-modern Bengali literature. In an age of abject submission to gods, Chand's exemplary defiance of the goddess Manasa at the cost of everything he possessed, has made him an apt symbol of heroic challenge to Fate. At the same time, the character gets a tragic dimension in so far as he has to stoop down ultimately yielding to his human affections. It is only natural that Sombhu Mitra used his hero as an archetypal character, transmuting his personal destiny into the destiny of mankind. His Chand is a modern man with a vision, and is destined to follow it alone in an alien world. Even when crushed to pieces he undauntingly continues to cry: 'Across, across, let us sail across the stream.'

Even a short comment such as this on the play cannot be complete without a note on its subtle use of language. Its dialogue pattern is in a regular rhythm with a smoothly balanced archaic tilt, moving freely from the mundane level of everyday speech to the heightened scale of poetic nuances, fulfilling thereby all the requisites of a modern poetic drama.

Towards a Poetic Drama

That takes us back to Buddhadev Bose, the most versatile author after Tagore. His readers quite often overlook that in the early thirties he tried his hand at plays also. But in the span of the last ten years of his life he made a glorious come-back with his play *Tapasvī O Taraṅgiṇī* (Tarangini and the Sage, 1966) followed by no less than eight full-length pieces.

At the end of each play, Buddhadev added adequate notes for the probable producers, but the plays have rarely been taken to stage and one suspects that they may not be quite successfully acted for a long time to come except over the radio. It is not that the author was unaware of this predicament, but unlike the earlier despairing youth, he was content to write these plays for a reading public, parti-

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cularly because the possibility of a poetic drama had already been looming large on the scene.

Experimentation in poetic drama was much in vogue among younger poets of the time, viz. Dilip Ray (1919–78), Ram Basu (b. 1926), Alok Sarkar (b. 1931) and Alokeranjan Das Gupta (b. 1933). Without any intention to storm the stage they wrote plays which were performed sometimes before select gatherings. Obviously inspired by the theories of Eliot, these poets failed to note that in the theatre a play must have a direct surface meaning to have an immediate impact on the senses.

Buddhadev Bose, on the other hand, tried to structure his plays with an effort to produce this immediate impact. The dialogues of *Tapasvī O Taraṅgiṇī* are of course set in a stylized prose, often reminding us of Tagore's prose version of *Caṇḍālikā*, but the internal dimension of its external action, its subtlety and poetic fervour gave way to his Mahabharata group of poetic dramas, viz. *Kālsandhyā* (The Ominous Evening, 1968), *Pratham Pārtha* (The First Son of Pṛtha, 1969), *Anāmnī Anganā* (The Unnamed Woman, 1970) or *Samkrānti* (The Moment Between an End and a Beginning, 1970).

In the last phase of his life, Buddhadev was completely preoccupied with his romantic study of the Mahabharata, trying to read in the epic a modern meaning which in its turn was not far from the core of his own poetry and drama. In *Tapasvī O Taraṅgiṇī*, for example, the original story of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga's seduction by an enchantress, was transcreated as the awakening of love and suffering through sexual passion, as also of an essential spirituality arising out of the conflict of the body and mind.

Buddhadev has a different type of plays in *Kolkātār Electra* (The Electra of Calcutta, 1968) and *Punarmilan* (Reunion, 1970) where one is confronted with the absurdity of time and existence, as is focused in this typical dialogue:

> *Jayā* (smiling). Do you think you are dead?
> *Nīlkaṇṭha*. I'm not sure.
> *Jayā*. You are suffering, Nilu. Does one suffer when Dead?
> *Nilkaṇṭha*. How do I know? Isn't it possible that we are dead, only that we don't know it? Isn't it possible that we had been dead all through, but only didn't know it?[40]

Yes, we are moving toward the Absurd.

From the Absurd to Commitment. Compare the above passage with the following piece from *Evam Indrajit* (1962, pub. 1965).

> *Playwright*. Where did you die?
> *Indrajit*. I am not dead.
> *Playwright*. Are you sure?
> *Indrajit* (after a long pause). No, I am not sure.[41]

From this life-in-death attitude or a sense of utter meaninglessness in our existence comes the state of a metaphysical anguish, which is the central theme of the Absurd. Badal Sircar (Bādal Sarkār, b. 1925) took up the thread in his *Evam Indrajit* (And Indrajit) in 1962, just when the movement seemed to have spent its force in the West. Not an accident, perhaps. That was the year of India's conflict with China, and the Communist Party of India showing all the signs of a split. That was the year when the *avant-garde* in Bengali poetry came in close contact with Allen Ginsberg to howl a protest against all possible norms of life. Fifteen years of Indian freedom yielding only a state of frustration and increasing self-divisions, it was not unexpected of the petty-bourgeois intellectual to grow aware of his own nakedness and impotence—his nothingness. Badal Sircar is one who tried to cope with this total waste when with a direct reference to the myth of Sisyphus he makes his characters say: 'Those whom I see around me have no shape, no colour, no substance. They are undramatic. They are Amal, Bimal, Kamal, and Indrajit.'[42]

The personal middle-class inertia of *Evam Indrajit* gave way to a sense of guilt in *Bāki Itihās* (The Rest of the History, 1967) where we confront the whole history of 'inhuman' civilization. In *Triṅśa Śatābdī* (The Thirtieth Century, 1969) it is no more a question of guilt, it is a call for responsibility. Thus, in his trilogy, the entire experience of a modern man has been captured.

There had been a lot of talk against the picture-frame or proscenium stage in Calcutta, but Badal Sircar is perhaps the only one who has been fighting it persistently with his application of the idea of the Third Theatre, a concept of the Poor Theatre (in its literal sense; somewhat different from Grotowski's idea of it),[43] since 1969, which was politically a significant year. West Bengal had already passed through the experience of the rise and fall of the United Front Governments; the upsurge of the ultra-left wing had been vehement; the state had been pushed almost to the verge of a civil war. The existential stance of Badal Sircar changed to a direct social involvement.

The dramatization (1972) of Howard Fast's *Spartacus* had been an exercise for him preparatory to his approach to this involvement. It was followed by plays like *Michil* (The Procession, 1974), *Bhomā* (1975) or *Sukhapāṭhya Bhārater Itihās* (A Delectable History of India, 1976), all of which could be performed without a stage, revealing his intention to enlighten the people about the pattern of colonial oppression suffered by the rural India. If one advances from *Bāki Itihās* to *Sukhapāṭhya Bhārater Itihās*, one can trace Badal Sircar's development from the theatre of the Absurd to a deeper social commitment.

Nothing Less Than Revolution

'From people like Bertolt Brecht and Arthur Miller I

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learned that all drama was political,' declared Kenneth Tynan,[44] the British critic. Utpal Dutt, the most prolific playwright in Bengal today would have preferred to substitute Gorky for Miller and called for nothing less than a revolutionary theatre. A formidable director and actor, more in the line of Stanislavsky and in content nearer Brecht,[45] Utpal Dutt has been writing for the last two decades unabashed propaganda plays leaping from slogan to slogan, documentary and street-corner plays sometimes, thus involving himself in political movements of our country during this period. How far truly Marxist his plays are has often been questioned, but there is no denying his rapport with the people in their struggle for progress.

Unlike Badal Sircar who tried to break through the old convention of well-knit story and character in a drama, Utpal believes in a massive story. His first significant play was *Aṅgār* (Charcoal, 1959) where the theme was exploitation in coal mines. The manner in which owners flood mines on fire and kill miners in order to save coal was spectacularly staged for the drama. But since there was no 'call for the armed overthrow of the sytem'[46] on the part of the oppressed, Utpal himself denounced the play later. Perhaps because of this revolutionary zeal, the titles of his plays themselves make a big armoury: swords, arrows, cartridges and rifles. The stories of his plays are mostly taken from the history of revolutions of different nations, viz. the Vietnamese War, the Cuban Revolution, the Black Revolution or Hitler's Germany of 1933—not to speak of the various phases of our own freedom movement.

Largely influenced by Piscator,[47] Utpal endeavours to use facts of oppression directly from books and journals without much embellishment; and on the other hand he uses all the loud devices of our village *Yātrā*, the theatre-in-the-round.

In *Kallol* (The Roaring Waters, 1965), the next big hit after *Aṅgār*, his subject is the Naval Mutiny of Bombay 1946. That the mutiny had faced an all-out attack from the bourgeois press is a proof of its comparative success in building up the thesis that our national leaders betrayed the cause of our freedom fight at a crucial moment, as has been shown in the action of the play. *Mānuṣer Adhikār* (The Human Rights, 1967) is a drama on racialism in which a Negro youth is on trial on the false charge of raping a white girl. In *Tiner Talvār* (A Foil of Tin, 1971), perhaps his best so far, he explores the dichotomy in our 19th-century Babu-culture. The play offers us an unforgettable dramatic moment when in a play within the play an actor playing in a farce suddenly transforms the farce into a drama on Titu Mīr and himself becomes a rebel in ecstasy.

Twice arrested by the police (1965, 1967) for his plays, several times attacked by hooligans for staging a satire on this city of nightmares, Utpal has been something of a fighter all along.

Allies from all Sides

Other playwrights have joined him.[48] He thinks it significant that a talented playwright like Mohit Chatterjee (Beng. Caṭṭopādhyāy, b. 1935) has come down from the surrealistic planes of, say, *Kaṇṭhanālite Sūrya* (The Sun in the Gullet, 1963) to plays like *Rājrakta* (King's Blood, 1970) or that Manoj Mitra (b. 1937) is crossing over his earlier works to *Cākbhāṅgā Madhu* (Fresh Honey from the Honeycomb, 1971). The present efforts of Arun Mukherjee (Beng. Mukhopādhyāy, b. 1937), Nabhendu Sen (b. 1944) or Debasis Majumdar (b. 1952) also are pointing toward the growth of a political theatre in Calcutta.

Mohit, primarily a poet, was at first concerned with the Theatre of the Absurd. His protagonists were eccentric, situations surreal, dialogues strewn with suffocating images—a good example of all of which is *Captain Hurrah* (1970). Here a ship is the symbol of the country, and the Captain is steering it through treacherous shoals to the fulfilment of a possible dream. But the dream was nebulous until Mohit came to write *Rājrakta* where he challenges the exploitative urban society a little more directly, without changing his favourite technique of intermingling reality with the unreal.

Manoj Mitra also, with plays in the lighter vein such as *Ṭāpur Ṭupur* (Drip and Drop, 1971) or *Śiber Asādhyi* (Baffling for the Gods, 1974), is at his best in *Cākbhāṅgā Madhu* where a forceful protest against rural exploitation has been powerfully dramatized by using in the plot a family of snake-charmers and a lecherous moneylender.

Sceptics may suggest, not without reason, that this political orientation does not always lead to analytic understanding of the socio-political situations, that mostly it turns out to be a romantic overture. Certainly there are some such examples, but these aberrations are only natural in the course of history.

NOTES

1. Mitra, Sombhu, 'Building from Tagore', *The Drama Review*, vol. 15, no. 3, New York, 1970, p. 203.
2. Dutt, Utpal, 'Theatre as a Weapon,' *The Drama Review*, vol. 15, no. 3, p. 236.
3. Mukherjee, Dhurjatiprasad, *Tagore–a Study*, Calcutta, 1972 p. 87.
4. Ibid., p. 94.
5. Tagore, Rabindranath, *Reminiscences*, London, 1971, p. 198.
6. Ibid., pp, 194–95.
7. Ibid., p. 196.
8. Tagore, Rabindranath, *Collected Poems and Plays*, London, 1961, p. 513.
9. Eliot, T. S., *Collected Plays*, London, 1962, p. 46.
10. Tagore, Rabindranath, *Collected Poems and Plays*, London, 1961, p. 502.
11. ———, 'Raṅgamanca', *Ravindra-Racanāvali*, vol. 5, Visva-Bharati, 1955, pp. 449–53; see also vol. 21, p. 116.
12. Artaud, Antonin, 'Oriental and Occidental Theatre', *The Theatre and Its Double*, New York, 1958, pp. 68–73.
13. Tagore, Rabindranath, *Sādhanā*, London, 1947, p. 5.

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14. Tagore Rabindranath, *Collected Poems and Plays*, London, 1961, p. 350.
15. ———, *The King of the Dark Chamber*, London, 1961.
16. ———, *The Post Office*, London, 1968, pp. 33–34.
17. Ayyub, Abu Sayeed, *Pāntha Janer Sakhā*, Calcutta, 1973, pp. 92–93.
18. Tagore, Rabindranath, *The Post Office*, London, 1968, p. v.
19. Ibid., p. 68.
20. Tagore, Rabindranath '*Red Oleanders:* Author's Interpretation', *The Visva-Bhārati Quarterly*, October 1925, p. 284.
21. 'Sudarsana is no more an abstraction than Lady Macbeth who might be described as an allegory representing the criminal ambition in man's nature.' Tagore, R. N., *Letters to a Friend*, London, 1928, p. 49.
22. Ibid., p. 172.
23. 'Perhaps the difference between him and most of the other writers was that he had very definite ideas to express, while others were contented to distort reality in a dreamy or vague way.' Aronson, A., *Rabindranath Through Western Eyes*, Allahabad, 1943, p. 115.
24. Tagore, Rabindranath, 'Jāvāyātrir Patra' (Letters from a Traveller in Java), *Rabindra Racanāvali*, vol. 19, pp. 491–95.
25. *Amritabāzār Patrika*, (13 March 1936.
26. Sanyal, H. K., *The Plays of Rabindranath Tagore; A Centenary Volume, 1861–1961*, New Delhi, 1961, p. 242.
27. Mitra, Sombhu, 'Building from Tagore', *The Drama Review*, vol. 15, no. 3, New York, 1971, p. 204.
28. Dutt, Utpal, 'Theatre as a Weapon,' op. cit., p. 237.
29. Bose, Buddhadev, *An Acre of Green Grass*, Calcutta, 1948, p. 98.
30. Ibid., p. 99.
31. Chanda, Rani, *Śilpiguru Abanindranāth* (Abanindranath, the Master Painter), Calcutta, 1972, p. 101.
32. Compiled in *Marxist Cultural Movement in India*, ed. Sudhi Pradhan, Calcutta, 1979, pp. 128–29.
33. Ibid., p. 129.
34. '*The Hunger and Epidemic Dance* done by Usha Dutta and Panu Paul moved the audience so much so that the crowd rushed forward to pay their humble mite for Bengal famine relief,' ibid., p. 253.
35. Banerjee, Samik, 'Problems and Directions: Calcutta's New Theatre', a conversation, *The Drama Review*, vol. 15, no. 3, New York, 1971, p. 243.
36. From the famous aphorism of J. R. Jimenez: 'Let roots have wings and wings roots'.
37. A few important translations or adaptations are from: *Oedipus Rex* (Sophocles): Sombhu Mitra; *Antigone* (Sophocles): Alokeranjan Dasgupta; *A Doll's House* (Ibsen): Sombhu Mitra; *An Enemy of the People* (Ibsen): Santi Basu; *The Lower Depths* (Gorky): (1) Umanath Bhattacharya, (2) Sibnarayan Ray; *The Cherry Orchard* (Chekhov): Ajitesh Bandyopadhyay; *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Pirandello): Rudraprasad Sengupta; *Rhinoceros* (Ionesco): (1) Sanoli Mitra, (2) Somendrachandra Nandi; *Antigone* (Anouilh): Chittaranjan Ghosh; *The Life of Galileo* (Brecht): Ritwik Ghatak (Ṛtvik); *Mother Courage* (Brecht): Utpal Dutt; *The Threepenny Opera* (Brecht): Ajitesh Bandyopadhyay; *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Brecht): Badal Sircar.
38. Mitra, Sombhu, 'In the Theatre', in *Modernity and Contemporary Indian Literature*, IIAS, Simla, 1968, p. 82.
39. Ibid., p. 81.
40. Bose, Buddhadev, *Punarmilan*, Calcutta, 1970, p. 138.
41. Sircar, Badal, *Evam Indrajit*, tr. Girish Karnad, Calcutta, 1974.
42. Ibid.
43. Sircar, Badal, *The Third Theatre*, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 25–26.
44. Tyan, Kenneth, *Tynan on Theatre*, Middlesex, 1964, p. 13.
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46. Dutt, Utpal, 'Theatre as a Weapon', *The Drama Review*, vol. 15, no. 35, New York, 1970, p. 226.
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Gujarati

SHIVKUMAR JOSHI

Introduction

There exists a widespread belief that in modern theatre the spoken word has been eclipsed by the visual spectacle. This was also true of the professional Gujarati theatre in the first decades after its Golden Age. Basically, a play is dialogue. In a play, ideas should be developed and explored through verbal means. The contemporary European theatre revolves around the 'Word'. In Gujarati theatre, however, a serious playwright has to face the challenge of the literary aspect being given second place, after visuality or theatricality, in the live theatre.

In developing theatre there should be a balance between the text and the visual dramatic aspect. Gujarati theatre is still not ready for such an extreme view as the one propounded by Peter Brook who believes that we live in an age of images where words have outlived their purpose. It still has also to decide whether it should return to 'total theatre' with substantial help of scenery, costumes and music or to the director-free simplicity of the folk theatre.

Western Influence

Western influences came to the Gujarati stage about a hundred years ago, through adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare. Crude or otherwise, his influence on the early Gujarati theatre movement cannot be neglected. He gave Gujarati theatre a new form and an emphasis of the spoken word on the stage. Gujarati dramatists, particularly the Parsees, trying to emulate Shakespeare succeeded only in introducing verbose and artificial language. Scenery and stage machinery became more important. As the cinema had not yet arrived, the theatre had enough scope to develop as an artistic medium to entertain and educate. But neither the producers nor the playwrights rose to the occasion.

A traditional function of the theatre has been to amuse and divert the audience. But modern drama at its best disturbs the audience by raising unsettling questions about human relationships and human existence. This attitude dawned upon Gujarati dramatists rather late, during the 1930–50 period, which could be described as the Gandhian era in Gujarati literature. In this era, Gujarati playwriting tended towards spiritual, social and psychological probing which challenged traditional patterns of thought and feeling.

The traditional play in Gujarat, like on any other regional stage in India, aimed almost exclusively at amusing and diverting the audience. It was not really escapism, but the treatment was generally haphazard or over-sentimental. Around 1920 or a little later, social criticism entered Gujarati theatre through comedy. Kanaiyalal Munshi wrote a few such pieces. (His *Brahmacarya Āśram* in four acts was published in 1931.) But all this writing was only scratching the surface of things. 'The playwright must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it', said Eugene O'Neill. Such an approach to Gujarati theatre was witnessed during the Gandhian era. This was when Gujarati playwrights began to tell their audiences, at the risk of their displeasure, the secrets of their own hearts. This kind of Gujarati theatre still continued. It is only now that a new movement in Gujarati theatre is in the offing.

The Theatre

It was around 1850–52, that Gujarati plays were first staged. Most of them were crude or tolerable adaptations. Only a few were original plays. The first original play, *Gulab*, was written by Nagindas Marfatia (Nagindās Mārfatiā), but it was available in printed form only in 1862. Some Parsees saw some English productions staged in Bombay during

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the post-1857 decade and were inspired to produce Gujarati plays, and this was the start of 'The Parsee Theatre'.

The Parsees introduced modern theatre not only in Gujarat but in many other parts of the country as well. Their movement, however, was strongest in Gujarat. They floated a few theatre companies with which a few well-known Gujarati authors, such as Dalpatram, Dahyabhai and Randhhodbhai Udayaram were associated. *Rustom-Sorab* and *Hariścandra Nāṭak* (1871) were some of the early productions. The poetry of *Rustom-Sorab* was written by Kavi Dalpatram (1820–98).

The Subodh Natak Company was established by Vaghiji Asharam Ojha in 1875. This name was subsequently changed to Morbi Arya Subodh Natak Mandali. The well-known author Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi (Maṇīlāl Nabhubhāī Dvivēdī, 1858–98) wrote a play *Kānta* (1882), to produce which, a new theatre company, Mumbai Gujarati Natak Mandali, came into existence. That was in 1889. The force behind this institution was Dayashankar Bhatt. In that very year another new theatre group also came into existence in Nadiad. A well-known writer, Dahyabhai Dholshaji, started the Shri Deshi Natak Samaj, which existed till very recently.

Kaikashru Naoroji Kabaraji, Balliwala, Khatau, Khambata and Thoothi, all Parsees, were responsible for the growth of theatre activity in Gujarat. Their work was strengthened by others before the 19th century ended. C. C. Mehta has described the state of affairs that existed during the early years of Gujarati Theatre thus:

> Hundreds of plays were staged, some of them running for more than a thousand performances, but their texts were not available in print; and the same thing continued even with the beginning of the 20th century. Even today a very few texts of the older plays are available, some of them never printed, and some rare copies of a few are lying in some old libraries facing destruction. There are reasons for this unfortunate state, the main one being the playwright had never an independent status, his hands were tied to the owner or the Manager of the Company. In short, copyright was hardly vested with them.

Drama as a literary form in Gujarati thus arrived—but its late arrival made it junior to the other forms of literature. The adaptation of Aristophanes *Plutus* by Kavi Dalpatram' was called *Lakṣmi* in Gujarati, and published in 1851. This marked the beginning.

Folk and Classical Theatre

Politically, the Golden Age of ancient Gujarat was the Solanki and Vaghela periods in the Middle Ages. In these times, religious fairs and pilgrimages were the common activities of the people, outside their work. Such forms could not be without theatrical presentations, mostly in folk-form. The first outside theatre traditions to percolate down into Gujarati theatre were *Śiṣṭa*, the influence of Sanskrit drama and literature, and *Bhavāī*, a form of folk theatre.

During the Rajput era, plays in Sanskrit were written and produced in Gujarat. In the writings of such great authors as Hemchandra Suri (1089–1174), there are references and detailed descriptions of such productions. References are found to the provisions made for money for theatre-productions while budgeting the general expenses of a Vishnu temple in Palanpur in northern Gujarat. There is also mention of King Siddharaj, the greatest of the Solanki, mingling with his subjects to watch theatrical performances at religious celebrations. There was during this period a developed theatrical tradition based on Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra* and several plays such as *Hammīrmaddarśan* (The Show of Hamir's Power) were produced. This tradition came to an end with the invasion of Gujarat by Allauddin Khilji. It is a strange coincidence that *Bhavāī* was first introduced in Gujarat with a play that had Allauddin's invasion as its background. This play was by Asait Thakor (14th century), a Brahmin from Oonza, a town in North Gujarat. *Bhavāī* was an extremely free form of folk theatre which could not be classed as sophisticated entertainment, nevertheless it must have inherited some important aspects of earlier theatrical traditions. *Zandāzuln* (flag hoisting or fluttering of the ceremonial flag), *Chhel Batāu* (A Dandy), *Jūṭhu* (A Liar) are some of the well-known *veṣās* (pieces) of *Bhavāī*; but this folk-form later tended to become 'vulgar and crude, base and overdrawn'.

The term *Bhavāī* is perhaps derived from the word *Bhāva* the expression of emotions. There is another school of scholars who feel that *Bhavāī* is derived from *Bhāvan* meaning a prayer offered to the gods. Others say it derives from *Bhav*, which means 'Shankar', and *ai*, which means 'mother'. Whatever the derivation, this theatrical form was very popular. Episodes from the daily routine of the people, sometimes satirical but mainly farcical, freely woven around some mythological or semi-historical event was the usual form of *Veṣ*. A series of *Veṣās* would be staged throughout the night on a high platform known as a *coro*, which was always an important point in village geography. The audience would sit around the *coro* and participate spontaneously since many of the *Veṣās* were known to them. The language the artistes spoke was Gujarati, but originally Asait Thakor must have written his *Veṣās* in Maru Gurjari, a language in use on the borders of northern Gujarat and Mevad, before the 15th century. The Targara communities of North Gujarat were generally professional performers of *Bhavāī*. Asait Thakor is believed to be their ancestor.

Dancing is an essential part of *Bhavāī*, the *Veṣās* generally beginning and ending with dancing, but this dance style has no connection with any of the four classical dance traditions

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Due to industrialization and modern education, this theatrical tradition is gradually vanishing. This free form, however, has enough potential to provide a base for an indigenous experimental theatre. Unfortunately, the modern Gujarati theatre has not accepted the *Bhavāī* tradition, and many playwrights have turned to the new theatre out of sheer disgust for the vulgarized *Bhavāī*.

The Modern Theatre

Modern Gujarati theatre was pioneered as a blending of two traditions, the European theatre adopted by the Parsees and the traditional Sanskrit *Nāṭya Śāstra* form.

After Ranchhodbhai Udayram (Raṇchōḍbhāī Udayrām, 1837-1923), wrote *Lalitā Dukh Darśak* (Depicting the Misery of Lalita, 1866), an importaat landmark in the history of the Gujarati theatre, there was a division of Gujarati drama into two branches, the literary and the theatrical. The commercial theatre naturally felt success could be achieved only if it could attract vast audiences and such crowds preferred the theatrical to the literary play. Ranchhodbhai borrowed from Sanskrit classical plays and also developed mythological themes but, at the same time, he tried to make theatre a 'social reformer'. His themes incorporated such episodes as would make an audience think twice about the prevailing social evils. His method was adopted by many of the later dramatists whose plays were known as *Dukhdarśak* (projecting unhappiness). Such themes were well received, though their value as literature was not high. These playwrights had a greater understanding of theatre than the modern Gujarati dramatists.

The first play by Ranchhodbhai Udayram, *Jaykumāri Vijay Nāṭak* was serialized in *Buddhiprakāś*, a monthly, in 1862 and was published in full in 1864. The theatrical style of Ranchhodbhai developed as an integral part of the professional theatre in Gujarat during the last quarter of the 19th century. The form was not completely devoid of the influence of folktheatre. The mixture of different styles developed into a commendable form and was at its best in plays by Dahyabhai Dholshaji (1867–1906). Thereafter the form began incorporating hyperbole, exaggeration and artificiality. Mulshanker Mulani, Manilal Pagal, Prabhulal Dwivedi, Raghunath Brahmabhatt, G. N. Vairati, Parmanand Trapajkar and Prafulla Desai among others adopted this form for their plays.

Generally speaking, this theatre form, which developed directly in some theatre companies, became very popular. The understanding of characterization, build-up of theatrical episodes and well-written dialogues were all its plus points. But all these ultimately led to the development of a theatrical form that was melodramatic and artificial, encouraging the lower elements in the uninitiated audiences in the name of entertainment.

The Early Modern Plays. *Kānta* by Manibhai Nabhubhai Dwivedi, a play in four acts, is one of the pioneer modern dramas. But its dialogue with large doses of poetry is not very appropriate for theatre production. The author, it seems obvious, was not acquainted much with theatre.

Rāī Nō Parvat (Rai Becomes Parvat, 1914) is another important landmark. This play, by Ramanbhai Nilkantha (Ramaṇbhāī Nīlkaṇṭh, 1868–1928), is considered one of the brightest jewels of Gujarati drama. It has all the ingredients of a good play and does not compromise with the demands of commercial theatre. The author, socially conscious and possessed of high ideals, does not stoop to win producers or audiences. For these reasons this play never achieved commercial success.

'Kānt' (pseud. of Maṇiśaṅkar Ratnajī Bhaṭṭ, 1867–1923) another great poet, wrote *Jālīm Ṭuliā* (The Tyrant Tulia) with an eye to stage production. The play was a success, but Kant did not approve of the production, as it tended towards commercial theatre. The production script of *Jālīm Ṭuliā* was however, published. *Guru Govindsingh* (1924) is another play ot Kant's, that is of some significance.

Mithyābhimān (Vainglory, 1867) by Kavi Dalpatram (1820–98), *Virmati* (1869) by Navalram Pandya (1836–88) are other socially conscious plays. These authors and some of their contemporaries wanted to utilize theatre as a medium for social change, just as later dramatists chose themes to encourage the fight for political freedom. Plays written to urge the breaking of political bondage include *Parākrami Paurav* (Courageous Paurav, 1931) by Jethalal Swaminarayan dedicated to the freedom fighters, *Pratāp Nāṭak* (1921) by Ganpatram Rajaram, *Sikandar Anē Poras* by Mulshankar Mulani (1868–1957), *Durgādās*, *Sirājddaulā* and *Pṛthvirāj* by Vairati and *Ajātśatru* by Raghunath Brahmbhatt.

Theatre at this time was the only entertainment Gujarati audiences could depend upon. To please them the dramatists adopted, usurped, twisted, vulgarized and overworked themes from Shakespeare, Sheridan, The Arabian Nights, Indian mythology and medieval history. These plays were produced with gusto, glittering stage-craft, loud histrionics and with classical and popular tunes adapted for the harmonium and a few other instruments. Plays such as *Alibābā Kām Kuṇḍalā*, *Hariścandra*, *Bhartṛhari*, *Gopicand*, *Saubhāgya Sundari*, *Mālavpati Muñj*, *Śālivāhan* and *Kādambarī* were some of the prominent productions with which playwrights such as Kabaraji, Marzban, Ranchhodbhai Udayram, Vaghjibhai Asharam, Dahyabhai Dholshaji, Nrisimha Vibhakar, Jaman, Narayan Thakur, M. Mulani, Manilal Pagal, Prabhulal Dwivedi, G. N. Vairati, Raghunath Brahmabhatt, Prafulla Desai, Parmanand Trapajkar and Nandalal Nakubhai, kept the commercial Gujarati theatre alive for 75 years.

The Modern Play before Independence. An important mile-

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stone in literary plays was the work of Nanalal Dalpatram Kavi (Nānālāl Dalpatrām Kavi, 1877–1946), one of the greatest Gujarati poets though his plays are barely stageable. They are written as though the poet did not care to understand theatre—its dimensions, its limitations and its purpose. His rapport is with readers and never with audiences. So critics classify Nanalal's plays as *Śrāvya Nāṭak*. But a special class of readers is drawn towards his flowery style and rhythm. The songs which punctuate his plays have some of the best lyrics composed in Gujarati. Kavi Nanalal perhaps, wanted to initiate a new form of Gujarati dramatic writing. He defended his plays by asking his readers to watch them being produced not on any visible stage but on the hidden stage of the reader's consciousness. Nanalal, however, never reached Rabindranath Tagore's stature in writing lyrical plays, as most of his characters lacked dimension. Certain theatrical fundamentals and aspects of stage discipline were beyond his grasp. He allowed directionless lyricism to overwhelm his work. He drew his themes from mythology or medieval history and wrote plays full of lyrics and ornate dialogue that is often high-brow and artificial.

Nanalal's *Viśva Gīta* (1927) and *Amarvel* were plays concerned with the vast cosmos, but even in plays such as *Jayā Jayant* (1914), which were supposed to relate to earth, he never accepted the norms of the regular stage. The way these plays were constructed, they could not be produced on any type of stage. In dealing with such intellectual subjects his thinking remains haphazard and formless.

Some of his important plays are *Jayā Jayant*, *Rājarṣī Bharat* (1922), *Viśva Gītā*, *Indukumār* (in three parts, 1909, 1927, 1932), *Jehāṅgīr Nūrjahān* (1928), *Śāhānśāh Akbar* (1930), *Amarvel*, *Śākuntalānunsambharanun* (Remembrance of Shakuntala).

Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi (Kanaiyālāl Māṇeklāl Munśī, 1887–1971), on the other hand, has written stageable plays, whether mythological or social satires. He is one of the outstanding figures in Gujarati drama-literature.

Munshi's *Vāvā Śethnu Svātantrya* (The Liberation of Vava Sheth, 1921), *Be Kharāb Jan* (Two Bad Persons, 1924), *Ājnānkiṭ* (Obedient, 1927) and later social plays such as *Dr. Madhurikā* (1948), *Kākānī Śāśī* (1929), *Pīḍāgrast Professor* (1924), *Brahmcaryāśram* (1931) and *Vāh Re Māin Vāh* (1953) dealt with social trends and not with serious problems. He also wrote mythological plays such as *Purandar Parājay* (Defeat of Purandara, 1922), *Avibhakta Ātma* (Undivided Souls, 1923), *Tarpaṇ* (1924) and *Putrasamovadi* (Equal to Son, 1926). His later plays such as *Dhruvsvāmini Devi* (1929) and *Lopāmudrā* show Munshi as an accomplished playwright who accepts this medium as a challenge. Munshi accepted the traditional form of Gujarati theatre thus creating stageable plays but at the same time he tried to remove some irritating qualities of the professional theatre. He attempted to build a link between the traditional and the new Gujarati theatre movement during 1920–30 period. It is claimed that Munshi was influenced by Ibsen and Shaw, but if there was any such influence it was only skin-deep.

The most significant contribution of Munshi to Gujarati Theatre has been to encourage the understanding of the drama written in the West. The dramatists who followed Munshi earnestly studied Ibsen, Shaw, Chekhov, Galsworthy and others.

A dramatist whose only passion has been to build a modern Gujarati theatre movement is Chandravadan C. Mehta (Mahetā, b. 1901). He is a poet, a producer, director and a very good stage-artiste who has spent his long life in trying to enrich Gujarati theatre.

C. C. Mehta's first important play was *Āggāḍī* (The Train, 1934) with which play the real modern Gujarati theatre was born. It is not only the realism of this play but also its structure, language and characters which gave Gujarati theatre a new direction. *Āggāḍī* is a play set in a railway colony in British times and all the characters belong to that world. The opposition to the dominance and high-handedness of the British and Anglo-Indian masters in the railway organization is voiced by unimportant, ordinary people.

C. C. Mehta has studied all types of national and international theatre movements and has experience of different theatre traditions. His scholarship and experience have helped him to create a variety of plays—traditional, dramatic, folk-style and experimental. Some of his better known plays are *Dharā Gurjarī* (The Soil of Gujarat, also a proper name, 1944), *Sonā Vātakadi* (Golden Bowl, 1955), *Menā Popaṭ* (Parrot—Male and Female, 1951), *Hohoḷī* (About the Holika, A Farce, 1957), *Param Māheśvar* (The Great Maheshwara, 1960).

He has also written a few biographical plays—*Narmad* (1937), *Akho* (1941) and *Kapurno Divo* (The Camphor Lamp) and children's plays—*Santākūdkadi* (Hide and Seek, 1937), *Ramakaḍāni Dūkān* (Toy Shop, 1937). Man's joys, is the central theme of Mehta's writing. Man's joys, miseries, triumphs and defeats, all aspects are covered, sometimes seriously, often lightly by Mehta who has covered much more ground than K. M. Munshi, and extended considerably the new tradition started by the latter.

In his play *Śikhariṇī* (1945) Mehta adopted what is considered an extremely bold approach to the man-woman relationship dealing as he did, with one woman and two men. His *Āṇalde* (second edition, 1948) is sentimental, *Dharā Gurjarī* is idealistic, while *Māzam Rāt* (Midnight, 1955) is a realistic social play. Such is the variety of C. C. Mehta, who created possibilities for the New Theatre, the non-professional, ultramodern and *avant garde*, if you will, of the sixties and the seventies. Between the Theatre

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C. C. Mehta and the early moderns' theatre are the plays of Ramanlal V. Desai (*Śankit Rhidaya*, 1925, *Sanyuktā*, *Anjani*), Gunvantrai Acharya (*Allābeli*, 1946), Dhansukhlal Mehta (*Garibni Zupadi*), Gulabdas Broker (*Dhumraser* 1948; *Mananān Bhūt*, 1967), Chunilal Madia (*Śunya Śeṣ*), Nandakumar Pathak (*Pārki Jani*, 1950), Pannalal Patel (*Allad Chhokari*, *Cando Ṣe Ṣāmalo*, *Jamāniraj*, 1952), Vajubhai Tank (*Brahmā-Viṣṇu ane Maheśvar*, *Praṇaynā Pūramān*, *Vaibhavnān Viṣ*, *Zānzvanan Jal*) and Yashodar Mehta (*Ghelo Babal*, *Mambo Jambo*, 1951). Two significant plays different from these are *Ṣarvilak* (1957) by Rasiklal C. Parikh (b. 1897) and *Paritrāṇ* (The Deliverance) by Manubhai Pancholi-Darshak (b. 1914). *Ṣarvilak* offers a different version of Sudraka's *Mrichhakaṭika*, while Darshak interprets the Mahabharat theme from a modern angle.

A successful but a different type of link between the old and the new has been achieved by Pragajibhai Dosa (b. 1907). This prolific playwright has written more than twenty plays, quite a few of which have run for over a hundred nights. His *Chhoru Kachhoru* (The Child Good or Bad, 1955), about a runaway child was translated into Russian and ran for more than a hundred nights in the U.S.S.R. Other important plays by Dosa are *Gharano Divo* (The Lamp of the Home, 1952), *Maṅgal Mandir* (The Beautiful Temple, 1955) and *Samayanan Vahen* (The Flow of Time). Prabodh Joshi (b. 1928) is another popular playwright. His *Pattani Jod* (A Pack of Cards, 1955) has run now for 4,500 nights and has been translated and staged in other Indian languages. Adi Marzban (b. 1914) is another very successful dramatist who knows his theatre, its language and dimensions better than many. His hilarious comedies are mainly about the Parsee community's way of life. Jayanti Dalal (1909–70) wrote only two full-length plays. One of them *Avataraṇ* (The Descent, 1949) a play about those still not born, an experimental play, created an uproar.

From a literary point of view, critics consider Shivkumar Joshi (Śivkumār Joṣī, b. 1916) as an important landmark in Gujarati drama-literature. From 1954 to 1979 he has written at least one full-length play every year. Right from *Sumaṅgalā* (1955) to *Navnirmāṇ* 77 (The New Dispensation, 1977) his plays have been significant contributions proving his intimate understanding of theatre. Some of his important plays include *Angār Bhasma* (The Dust from the Fire-place, 1956), *Suvarṇrekhā* (1961), *Kruttivās* (1965), *Sāp Utārā* (1966), *Sandhikāl* (The Age of Transition, 1967), *Ajarāmar* (1970). Joshi is not a very successful playwright on the stage. It requires producers and artistes of understanding to stage his plays successfully.

Other Writers. Raghuvir Choudheri (b. 1938), Bakul-Tripathi (b. 1928), Labhshankar Thakar (b. 1935), Sitanshu Yashashchandra (b. 1941), Madhu Rye (b. 1942), Chinu Modi (b. 1939) and Subhash Shah are some of the other important playwrights of the seventies. They have been able to create a new sense of urgency, and have introduced a different kind of sensitivity in their plays which are very much part of the new wave in modern Indian Theatre. Amongst the best work of this group are Raghuvir Choudheri's *Zulatā Minārā* (Vacillating Columns, 1970), *Aśok Van* (The Ashoka Forest, 1970) and his latest *Sikandar Sahāni* (1979), Labhshankar's *Mansukhlāl Majithiā*, *Pilun Gulāb* (Yellow Rose), *Ek Undar ane Jadunath* (A Mouse and Jadunath), Sitanshu Yashashchandra's *Vaiśakhi Koyal* (The Cuckoo of the Summer) and *Ā Māṇas Madrāsi Lāgechhe* (This Man Seems to be a Madrasi), Madhu Rye's *Koi Pan Ek Ful Nun Nām Boloto* (Speak Out The Name of Any Flower), *Kumārni Agāṣi* (Kumar's Terrace), *Āpaṇe Clubmān Malyāhatā* (We Had Met in a Club), *Santu Rangili*, *Khelando* (The Sportsman) and *Śarat* (The Bet), (the last three being adaptations of *Pygmalion*, *Sleuth* and *The Visit*). Two other significant plays of this period are Shrikant Shah's *Tirād* (The Crack) and Bakul Tripathi's *Līlā*.

One-Act Plays. Some well-known one-act playwrights are: Gulabdas Broker (b. 1909), Pushker Chandervaker (b. 1920), Jayanti Dalal (1909–70), Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai (1892–1954), Pragajibhai Dosa (b. 1907), Indulal Gandhi (b. 1904), Shivkumar Joshi (b. 1916), Umashankar Joshi (b. 1911), Zhaverchand Meghani (1897–1947), Chandravadan C. Mehta (b. 1901), Dhansukhlal Mehta (1890–1970), Hansaben Mehta (b. 1897), Kanaiyalal M. Munshi (1887–1971), Yashwant Pandya (1906–55), Batubhai Umarvadia (1899–1950), Krishnalal Shridharani (1911–60), Dhirubhen Patel (b. 1916), Vajubhai Tank, Prabodh Joshi (b. 1927), Jashwant Thakar, Chunilal Madia (1922–68).

The Gujarati one-act play, reflecting a conscious effort of playwrights to follow a western pattern, is a literary form of the latter half of the 19th century. No one bothered to discover or follow the wonderful shorter Sanskrit plays of Bhasa. The western form was handy and attracted these playwrights, some of whom experimented with this form to gain the necessary confidence to write full-length plays. Their exercise brought in good dividends. Precision, speed, smart dialogue, well-drawn characters, reliable and logical elements of surprise and liberal attitudes were developed.

Surprisingly, most of these talented one-act dramatists, however, ultimately never bothered themselves with full-length plays. Umashankar Joshi, Jayanti Dalal, Shridharani, Batubhai Umarvadia, Yashwant Pandya, even a prominent poet like Rajendra Shah, all gave full-length plays a miss. Parsee writers mainly used the one-act play to enact farces. Even before they entered this field, a few tried to reshape the *Bhavāī* form into short plays. That was during the 1853–1913 period. Jahangir Patel (1861–1936) wrote *Gulfām*. It is an accepted fact that these Parsee one-act

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plays were much better constructed that those of Umarvadia or Yashwant Pandya. Particularly from 1900 to 1921, the Parsees developed this theatrical form with great success.Their treatment was very light and always developed hilarious situations, capturing audiences from beginning to end. Their one-act plays were also published in Parsee journals and were popular with readers also. Some of them are also very artistic. Among the better plays of this type were *Satyānāś Vāli Nākhyun* (Created Total Destruction), *Raṅg Chhe Raṅg* (Hats Off), *Topsy-turvy*, *Matlab Bahero* (Conveniently Deaf), *Madhrātno Parono* (The Midnight Guest). Baliwala describes these plays as 'skits' and says these were farcical absurdities from which the authors as well as their audiences derived joy.

A new phase in Gujarati one-act plays started in 1922–23 with farce giving way to serious plays. Batubhai Umarvadia (1899–1950) was the pioneer among non-Parsee Gujarati playwrights. His *Matsyagandhā, Gāṅgeyā ane Bijā Nāṭako* (Matsyagandha, Gangeya and other Plays, 1925) was followed by another collection of one-act plays, *Mālādevi Ane Bijā Nāṭako* (Maladevi and Other Plays, 1927). These were collections of original serious one-act plays. Umarvadia was influenced by well-known western dramatists of his time. His Gujarati language was that of an educated person. His plays were very stageable; they also had enough literary merit to attract the attention of critics as well as those interested in drama-literature. Yashwant Pandya (1906–55) was Batubhai's contemporary; so was Pranjeewan Pathak (b. 1898). *Zānzavā* (The Mirage) by Pandya and *Anupam ane Cori* or *Rudramukh ane Ranjanā* by Pathak are plays that were well received. They opened up a new phase of Gujarati one-act plays.

Umashankar, Shridharani and Jayanti Dalal, who followed this trio, wrote one-act plays about the village and the city, about villagers and city dwellers, their behaviour, aspirations, achievements and frustrations. These dramatists, who had a good knowledge of such plays in western literature, used this background intelligently to project their themes and ideas, the incidents and characters in sharp focus. They employed flashback and various other new techniques in these plays.

Umashankar Joshi (Umāśaṅkar Jośī, b. 1911) published his first collection of one-act plays, *Sāpnā Bhārā* (A Group of Snakes) in 1936 and another collection, *Śahid* (The Martyr) in 1951. His one-act plays are realistic, fresh, frank and satiric. *Haveli* (The Palace, 1955), *Udan Carakaladi* (The Flying Sparrow, 1950), *Sāpanābhārā* (1950) and *Durgā* (1950) are some of his best plays. Other significant playwrights of this type are Krishnalal Shridharani, Indulal Gandhi (b. 1904) and Durgesh Shukla (b. 1907). All three are basically poets, but as dramatists who understood and employed theatre-geography correctly, they have tried their hand at one-act plays in Gujarati.

Then arrived Jayanti Dalal (Jayanti Dalāl, 1909–70). He had inherited theatre, he claimed; he was born on a stage, he said. Like C. C. Mehta, who had produced some wonderful one-act plays by this time, Jayanti Dalal also produced, directed and acted in his own plays. Between 1933 and 1963, C. C. Mehta published three collections of one-act plays: *Akho, Varvahu Anebijā Nāṭako* (The Husband, The Wife and Other Plays, 1933), *Premna Moti ane Bijo Nāṭako* (The Pearl of Love and Other Plays, 1937) and *Raṅga Bhandār* (The Store of Colour, 1953). During the same period Jayanti Dalal published four outstanding collections: *Javanikā* (The Curtain, 1940), *Praveś Bijo* (Scene Two, 1950), *Trijo Praveś* (Scene Three, 1953) and *Chotho Praveś* (Scene Four, 1957). Employing sarcasm, wit, sharp dialogue and criticism of social as well as political attitudes, Jayanti Dalal wrote short plays of lasting literary value. Some of his best plays are *Mā Ni Dikari* (Mother's Daughter; Chip of the Same Block, 1953), *Soyanun Nākun* (Eye of the Needle, 1950), *Draupadi No Sahakār* (Draupadi Cooperates, 1950) and *Jīvan Dīp* (The Lamp of Life, 1940). Dhansukhlal Mehta (1892–1974), Ramanlal Desai (1892–1954), Hensa Mehta (b. 1897) and Umesh Kavi are some other recognized writers of one-act plays during this period.

Belonging to the post-Independence period are Gulabdas Broker, Chunilal Madia and Shivkumar Joshi, three important one-act play writers. Gulabdas Broker (Gulābdās Broker, b. 1909), better known as an outstanding short-story writer, usually writes about city life and city-folk in his one-act plays. Even in a play like *Mahānibandha* (The Thesis, 1955), which has a village background, he has brought in a city-dweller as its main character. *Ghar Kūkadi* (The Household, 1955), *Mā Ane Dikari* (Mother and Daughter, 1955), *Ṣarebajār Mān* (On the Stock Exchange, 1955), all with city backdrops, are his important one-act plays, but *Mahānibandha*, wherein he features a sentimental, simple village girl and a smart, wavering young man from the city, is his best. His collection of one-act plays, *Jvalant Agni* (The Burning Fire) was published in 1955.

Chunilal Madia (Cunilāl Madiā, 1922–68) was another successful one-act playwright. He was able to project village life and village folk with complete ease. At the same time he is at home with city life too. His three collections of one-act plays have established him as an important Gujarati one-act play dramatist. *Raṅgadā* (The Theatre Ground, 1951), *Viṣ Vimocan* (The Shedding of Poison, 1955) and *Rakta Tilak* (The Red Tilakam, 1956) include some really outstanding plays such as *Vāni Māri Koyal* (Swept Cuckoo), *Samrāt Śrenik* and *Kankunā Thāpā*. Some of his plays possess a deep tragic vein, a few are sarcastic, others exhibit intelligent wit and well-delineated characters. His command over diction is remarkable.

Pushker Chandervaker is another important one-act playwright. He uses with understanding the village and city people for his shorter plays. His *Piyar No Padosi* (The

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Neighbour from the Father's Place, 1955) is one such successful play. The well-known novelist Pannalal Patel (b. 1912) also has written a few very interesting one-act plays, such as *Jamai Rāj* (The Son-in-law, 1952), *Ele Nahi To Bele* (If Not with Consent, Then by Force, 1953) and *Vaitaraṇi Ne Kānthe* (On the Bank of the Vaitarani River, 1955). He has used his own rural background to advantage.

Shivkumar Joshi wrote around 45 one-act plays between 1950 and 1977. His six collections of plays have made him one of the better-known one-act dramatists in Gujarati literature. He draws his inspiration from the daily life of the city. His general treatment is psychological, his language polished, as spoken in cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda and Bombay. He varies his techniques, using flashbacks or two simultaneous situations in one scene. He is always in search of new forms and, in his later plays, he has taken liberties with locales and characters as well as with incidents. His collections are *Pāṅkh Vinānā Pārevān* (Pigeon without Wings, 1954), *Anant Sādhanā* (Eternal Sadhana, 1955), *Sonāni Hānsadi* (The Necklace of Gold, 1959), *Nīlāncal* (The Blue Cloth, 1962), *Nīrad Chhāya* (Cloudy Shadows, 1966) and *Gaṅga Vahechhe Āpani* (Your Ganges is Flowing, 1980). Phiroz Antia (*Chh Nāṭako-Nav Nāṭako*; Six plays, Nine Plays), Prabodh Joshi (*Māf Karaja Ā Nāṭak Nahi Bhajvāy*; Pardon, This Play cannot be Staged), Chinubhai Patwa (*Śākuntala Nunbhūt*; The Ghost of Shakuntala) and Rambhabhen Gandhi (b. 1911) (*Rojani Rāmāyaṇ*; The Everyday Ramayana) are some of the other successful playwrights of the post-Independence period. But after 1955–56 once-successful one-act dramatists hardly produced any new work in this genre.

Experimental Plays

The 'Theatre of the Absurd' arrived in Gujarat around 1965 and still exists there; its presence was especially felt in Ahmedabad and other important cities. *Avant-garde* theatre is a result of the revolt of a new generation of writers against the traditional forms.

Young dramatists found the new theatre of the 1930–60 period not very different from the traditional approach to one-act as well as to full-length plays. The earlier traditions of the late 19th and 20th centuries were practically forgotten, but what replaced them was not dramatically different. Western theatre of the sixties on the other hand, offered them something radically different, and quite a few poets groping for new forms in poetry felt they could also handle these new dramatic forms.

The movement started with shorter plays—a few of them could be even termed as skits. Re-Math, an organization of young Ahmedabad writers, brought out a collection entitled *Make Believe* in 1967 and another collection by the poet Adil Mansoori called *Hāth Pag Bāndhāyēlā Chhē* (Hands and Feet are Tied) in 1970. *Dial Nān Paṅkhi* (The Birds of the Dial, 1967) by another poet, Chinu Modi (b. 1939), was published in 1967 and was followed by *Falāna Nun Flower Vāz* (Somebody's Flower Vase, 1968) by Madhu Kothari and *Kilmol* (1968) by Kirit Vaidya.

These plays are mainly one-scene plays. In them prose and poetry are often mingled. The emphasis is on acting. Mime is also used to produce unusual or absurd effects. The established pattern of one-act plays of the 1930–60 era reflects a good construction, an intelligible theme, live characters with distinct individuality, logical or natural action and dialogue. All these characteristics are not found in the new movement. There is a deliberate move to twist, mutilate or distort the Man the audience knows, recognizes or can establish rapport with. This Man speaks a language which appears to have little meaning and often seems purposeless. Characters are symbolic as are situations, the stage decor and, often, the 'themes'. All these symbols endeavour to project some deep urge or unbearable pain or loneliness. There is a constant search for something which cannot be described in so many words. To these playwrights life is complex; it is a jigsaw puzzle which refuses to come to terms with Man.

This Man is always under some unbearable pressure, he has no individuality, he is formless, purposeless and frustrated, he is forever in search of an identity which eludes him. He is afraid of the uncertainties of the future. He feels unsafe, unprotected and has lost his initiative. The constant shadow of death disturbs him. Life, the world, the universe, God, all these are to be laughed at. He has lost all belief. He becomes desperate and wants to break away from, and destroy, everything. Even then, he fails, because life has its own compulsions from which he cannot escape. While wanting to break old values he aspires to create new ones—unconsciously, of course.

The *avant garde* plays try to project this turmoil of Man through incomprehensible patterns of speech or movement and abnormal situations. The authors of these plays do not feel that this is a futile exercise. Playwrights such as Adil Mansoori, Chinu Modi, Madhu Rye, Labhshankar Thakar, and Mukund Parikh have given a new dimension to the Gujarati language and introduced a new approach to theatre-literature which commands respect. Their inspiration has not been Badal Sarkar or Vijay Tendulkar or any Indian author, but the western ones such as Ionesco, Genet, Aarabel, Becket and Albee. *Jhērvun ane Āpanun To Evun* (The Poison and Such is Our Method) by Madhu Rye, *Hun Coras Indā Ane Golkabaro* (I, Square Eggs and Round Graves) by Mukund Parikh, *Vṛkṣa* (The Tree) by Labhshankar Thakar, *Bahār Nā Polān* (Hollow from Outside) by Subbash Shah, *Bābāgādi* (The Perambulator) by Chinu Modi, *Ḍabbā* (The Boxes) by Madhu Kothari and *Kilmol* by Kirit Vaidya, among others, are interesting creations but none of them are signal achievements.

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Radio Plays

Radio plays were originally considered as merely being shorter written plays which were read and broadcast. But gradually it dawned upon some writers that radio is an entirely different medium and plays for it had to be treated much differently, with greater attention being paid to the spoken word and other sound effects.

After the Baroda and Ahmedabad radio stations were established, several new authors tried their hand at this developing medium. In 1954 when All India Radio announced a competition for radio plays, over a hundred scripts were offered by that many writers. But only a few authors grasped the special technique and have written good radio plays. *Ranchhodlāl*, a biographical play by Yashodhar Mehta, *Vāni Māri Koyal* (The Wind-swept Cuckoo, 1951) by Chunilal Madia and several scripts by C. C. Mehta have enriched this special branch of dramatic literature. Mehta has demonstrated a unique understanding of this medium and as he was connected with the AIR for several years, he has taken full advantage of it and produced and participated in several productions with great success. Shivkumar Joshi is one of the pioneers among writers of radio plays. Quite a few of his radio-scripts have been produced in AIR's National Programme including the prize-winning *Anant Sādhanā* (The Eternal Sadhana, 1955).

Many well-known dramatists writing in Gujarati have contributed plays for radio, but there have been no exclusive collections of radio plays published. Most radio plays have been published in regular one-act collections.

Atralupta Sarasvati (The River Saraswati was Lost Here), *Khūn* (Murder) and *Sardār* (The Life of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in several independent instalments) have been the significant contributions of C. C. Mehta. *Madhukar Puspa Vilāsm*, *Komal Gāndhār* (a musical term) and *Beti* (Daughter) are some of the outstanding radio plays by Shivkumar Joshi. Raghuvir Choudhary and Vibhut Shah are two regular contributors to AIR. Bakul Tripathi is another important writer whose innumerable lighter radio-scripts have been well received. But, generally speaking, this medium has not been developed much, because there are only a few dramatists who can exploit the medium with understanding.

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Hindi

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Hindi drama has its roots in, and initially was an extension of, the Sanskrit dramatic art-form in its decadence. Sanskrit drama after the 10th century lost its tenor. It strove no more through symbol and gesture to realize the truth behind human experience; but confined itself to the rigidity of academic norms and created distorted imitations of the great classical dramas. Sanskrit playwrights like Murārī, Rājaśekhara, Jayadeva, Someśvara belong to this category. But with the advent of the modern era and the impact of western civilization, Hindi drama took a new turn and developed, as a reaction to the earlier attempts. Thus, Hindi drama flourished on a dualism between the extension of Sanskrit drama on the one hand and a reaction to it on the other.

The Early Plays

In spite of our long tradition of dramatic art in Sanskrit, it looks rather strange that before Bharatendu Harish Chandra (Bhāratendu Hariścandra, 1850–85), not more than a dozen dramas were written in Hindi which had emerged as an independent language as early as the 11th century. These works are also, in fact, dramas only in name. They have hardly any dramatic element except dialogues, exits and entrances of characters with hardly any action.

The first available drama in Hindi is *Rāmāyaṇa Mahānāṭaka* written by Prāṇcand Cauhān in 1610 and the second is *Hanumannāṭaka* of Hṛdayarāma written in 1623. Both

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of them are based on the Ramayana presenting a continuity of the theme in verse-dialogues. They are really dramatic poems lacking even the broad characteristics of drama. There is no unfolding of the plot from the beginning to the final attainment of the desired object through the denouement. *Śakuntalā* (1633) of Nevāz, *Samayasāra* (1636) of Banārasīdās, *Sabhāsāra* (1700) of Raghurāma Nāgara and *Karuṇābharaṇa* (1715) of Kṛṣṇajīvana Lachīrāma are in no way different. Maharaja Jasvant Singh's (1627–78) *Prabodha Candrodaya* (1643) does not technically lack in the basic dramatic elements. But it has little literary merit, being just a translation of a Sanskrit work—prose for prose and verse for verse.

The decline of Hindi drama in the medieval period is attributed to three or four events. One of the most important reasons is the intellectual movement of the 15th–16th centuries which spread in the Gangetic valley initiated by saint poets like Kabir and others. Their poetry evinced an intellectual approach to devotion which created a kind of indifference towards life as such. This apathy towards life which is imaginatively reconstructed in dramatic art, created a kind of void in the field of drama. The Islamic taboo against such forms of entertainment was also responsible for the decline of Hindi drama which reflected the popular pattern of Hindu culture. The absence of real forceful prose in Hindi was another reason. Though early specimens of Brajabhāṣā prose are found in the religious discourses and the biographical accounts written by Gokulanātha, they have no literary merit in them. With the growth of a new literary dialect (Khaṛībolī, the spoken language of Delhi and Agra since the 14th century), a powerful and purposeful prose style gradually developed in the 19th century which could voice the aspirations and sentiments of the people through various literary genres. The continued absence of a national stage was also a serious limitation for the development of drama during medieval times. *Jānakī Maṅgala* of Śitalā Prasāda Tivārī was the first play staged in Benares in the year 1862 as mentioned in the article *Nāṭaka* by Bharatendu Harish Chandra. (Jagadish Chandra Mathur, 'Hindī Raṅgamañc aur Nāṭya-racanā kā Vikās', *Ālocanā*, 2.2, 1953.) This was followed by *Raṇadhīra Prema Mohinī* of Śrīnivāsa Dās and *Satya Hariścandra* of Bharatendu at Allahabad and Kanpur. In 1853 an opera, *Indar-Sabhā*, written in Urdu by Munshi Amānat Khān, was first staged in Lucknow. It is said that the Barādarī at Kaiserbagh was especially constructed for the presentation of this opera and the late Nawab of Oudh, Wajid Ali Shah himself played the role of Indra. Though written in Persian script and in the *masnavī* metre, it has a place in Hindi literature as well, because it influenced and promoted the Parsee theatre of the last quarter of the 19th century where opera plays written as imitation of *Indar Sabhā* were a great success. In another sense *Indar Sabhā* has a place in Hindi literature because of its diction also which has a touch of Hindi language throughout. These dramatic performances have a positive bearing on the future development of Hindi drama.

The First Original Play. With all these handicaps however the art survived somehow in the folk-dramas of the Gangetic Plain popularly known as *Rāmalīlā*, *Rāsalīlā*, *Saṅgīto* (*Nauṭaṅkī*) and others which flourished in the villages drawing sustenance from the life of the people and also in turn enriching their life. Drama is life and there is hardly a class of people who do not need relaxation and entertainment, who do not love to watch a visual representation of their life and lore whether moral or religious, realistic or symbolic. Thus a kind of composite folk-drama with song, dance and poetry entertained the masses during the dark period of Hindi theatre. These folk-dramas, presented on an improvised stage, with the help of dialogue, declamation, mime, song and dance had the seeds of all the dramatic elements in them, but lacked sophistication and literary merit. Yet one can make bold to say that proper Hindi drama, which is essentially an urban growth, originated in these folk-dramas. In Bengali, Girish Chandra Ghosh (1844–1911) experimented successfully with various components of *Yātrā* (Bengali folk-drama) but it does not mean that Bengali drama is a sophisticated form of *Yātrā*, which in fact it is not. Moreover in the Hindi folk-dramas—*Rāmalīlā*, *Rāsalīlā* and others, there is hardly any material which could be tapped for furthering its own development. This is the reason why these folk-dramas are played in the same hackneyed way year after year, of course, insinuating their meaning into the collective unconscious of the Indian mind which is the very backbone of the people's art and morality. These folk-dramas, of course, had one important part to play. They provided mythological subjects, and attempts were made at original plays with their themes. The first original play in Hindi was *Ānanda Raghunananda* written by Maharaja Vishvanath Singh of Rewa in 1700. It is a play in Brajabhāṣā though the characters in their dialogues use Khaṛībolī prose also. This play in seven acts, with a large number of scenes, dramatizing the journey of Rama from Ayodhya to Lanka, makes use of all the dramatic techniques in the construction of the plot as propounded by Bharata, but the style is more poetic and less dramatic and sharply slanted towards the *Rāsalīlā* tradition. Mainly for this reason, *Nahuṣa Nāṭaka* written by Gopal Chandra (alias Giri Dhar Das), father of Bharatendu Harish Chandra, in 1841 is accepted as the first original literary play in Hindi. It deals with Indra's expulsion from his throne by Nahusha and his subsequent reinstatement. According to Harish Chandra this play meticulously follows all the tenets of the dramatic art and is the first play in the Hindi language. During this time Rājā Lakṣmaṇ Singh translated in 1862, the famous Sanskrit play of Kalidasa, *Śākuntalam*, which was very greatly admired for laying the foundation of literary drama

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composition in Hindi and refining the taste of the people which had been polluted by the cheap entertainment unfortunately provided by the Parsee theatre.

Parsee-Hindi Theatre

In reality the proper development of Hindi drama could be linked with the Parsee theatre which came into being sometime in the seventies of the 19th century. The Parsee theatre was the first organized multilingual commercial theatre movement in India. It was probably the first to absorb in its productions many elements of the folk theatre forms, particularly the musical or the *saṅgīta* tradition of northern India. It is named Parsee theatre because it had the patronage of the rich Parsee community of Bombay. The three top dramatists of the Parsee Hindi theatre, Nārāyaṇa Prasāda Betāb, Āgā Hasra Kāśmīrī and Rādhe Śyāma Kathāvācaka made it quite popular with the urban public though at the cost of good taste. It was melodramatic, extravagant, and its sole purpose was to cater to a public which enjoyed cheap entertainment without aesthetics. Of course, it used the spoken language of the people in the north and was quite successful and popular. But it is necessary for a living theatre to have its roots firmly set in the society. The Parsee theatre did not receive necessary support from the society. Like the Bengali theatre it did not get the patronage of religious leaders like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Marathi theatre was also lucky in having patrons like Bal Gangadhar Tilak. The Parsee theatre, however, never received such attention because of its involvement in cheap melodrama and vulgarisms. In his essay 'Nāṭaka' Bharatendu says 'The Parsee Theatre Company staged *Śakuntalā* in Kāśi. Here the hero Duṣyanta was shown dancing and prancing like a bazar woman. Dr Theno, Bābū Pramadādās Mitra and other enlightened people got disgusted and came out of the hall saying that they could not stand it any further, as the producers were murdering Kalidasa' (*Nāgarī Pracāriṇī Sabhā Hīraka Jayantī Aṅka*, p. 157). To counteract this bad influence, to bring the stage close to the literature of taste and to express the emerging national consciousness and reformist ideas, Bharatendu Harishchandra, turned to Hindi drama. Parsee theatre, in the meantime, could not stand the onslaught of the talkies and petered out slowly.

Bharatendu and his Group of Playwrights

Bharatendu Harishchandra is the father of Modern Hindi Drama. This was the period when our contact with the West caused the Indian Renaissance. But this Renaissance differs from European Renaissance because at the time of its advent we were not politically free. As a result there was not so much stress on individualism or humanism or on reason as on nationalism. The spirit of nationalism is characterized by a love of the past, of all that was noble and worthy in our heritage and also by a desire to change the age-old degenerate social order. The university savants and men of letters were enthusiastic about western knowledge to set the tone of social and moral regeneration. On the other hand there was a yearning for reviving the glory of our past culture and civilization which was an offshoot of nationalism. Thus the spirit of nationalism, reformation and revivalism dominated the Indian Renaissance in the second half of the 19th century. Bharatendu discovered early in life that drama could be used as an effective means of social awakening and for exposing the disintegration of values nurtured by the rhetorical poetry of the 18th century. In his semi-historical and mythological plays he re-created the past with national fervour symbolizing the spirit of protest against foreign domination. In the presentation of mythological characters, he has focused on the human element. In fact, he remained close to the earth and the common man and drew his characters mostly from real life. His first play is *Vidyāsundara* (1868) which is a transcreation of the original Bengali *Kāvya* of Bharat Chandra. The cavalier attitude of Bharat Chandra is very much diluted by Bharatendu in his play with a view to infusing it with a social purpose.

Besides *Vidyāsundara* Bharatendu wrote fifteen other dramas, out of which five are translations and ten original, including three farces. *Satya Hariścandra* (1875) is the first original attempt at mythological drama. This play was written primarily to counteract the influence of the Parsee theatre. No sooner was it published than it captured the stage. It portrays the eternal conflict between truth and falsehood. King Harishchandra symbolizes the idea of truth which Viśvāmitra tries in vain to foil. Ultimately truth triumphs. The dramatic rendering of this ethical theme was, in fact, designed to exalt Indian culture which cherishes such ideals dearly. This yearning for cultural revival betrays Bharatendu's romantic and idealistic attitude to life. The plot construction is rather loose with no serious attempt at characterization. It is, in fact, a play with a purpose. Even then the human greatness, poetical descriptions and romantic aura make it one of the most popular plays of his time. *Prem Joginī* (1875) is a social play exposing the immoral life of the priests. *Candrāvalī* (1876) is a sort of poetical drama with a mythological theme where Candrāvalī, the heroine, symbolizes the eternal quest of the soul to realize the Supreme Reality. The dramatic conflict is lost because of long speeches. Bharatendu uses the same technique in *Bhārata Durdaśā* (The Plight of India, 1876) where the plot changes from a social to a political theme. It portrays a gloomy picture of the educated Indians and exposes the rulers who considered themselves paragons of all virtues. *Bhārata Jananī* (Mother India, 1877) is an adaptation of a Bengali play with so many innovations that it is taken as an original play. It is an allegory of Mother

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India, the presiding deity of the country. Some Indians and two Europeans symbolized as patience and courage are its characters. *Nīladevī* (1880) is a tragic play where a semi-historical plot is developed into a message to Indian women to shed their ignorance and cultivate learning to equip themselves for life's struggle. In the preface Bharatendu writes, 'It is my desire that Indian women should come out of their indolence on the road to progress by following western women in their wisdom, education, self-respect and patriotism. It is our belief that our women were not in this deplorable state from eternity. To dispel any doubt about it, the play has been written and dedicated to the readers.' Nīladevī, the wife of the defeated prince, kills the enemy-chief and saves the honour of the country by killing herself.

In his three satires and farces, *Vaidikī Himsā Himsā Na Bhavati* (Ritual Killing is No Killing, 1873), *Viṣasya Viṣamauṣadham* (Poison is Antidote for Poison, 1876) and *Andhera Nagari* (A Nightmarish Town, 1881), Bharatendu on the one hand revolts against decadent social institutions and on the other ridicules the western mode of life which had begun to permeate the life of the people during those days. His *Andhera Nagarī* has become a byword for any set-up or situation where justice has no relevance. The story of a city where everything sells at the same rate and where a person is punished without any reason is as relevant today as it was a century ago when the play was written. These dramas combine biting sarcasm with humour and aim at social reform. Unlike Bengali playwrights, Bharatendu steers a middle course in his dramatic technique. He has neither followed the canons of Sanskrit dramaturgy nor the techniques of western theatre. He has struck a compromise between the two, though the slant is more towards western technique. With a strong sense of nationalism he depicts the social condition of his time purposefully with a view to arousing the people from their age-long slumber. This purposiveness, in no way, undermines the dramatic values of his plays. He remains the pioneer of renaissance in Hindi drama.

Ideals of social reform, feelings of patriotism and an interest in the rediscovery of the past swayed the playwrights of the Bharatendu era. As a result Śrīnivāsa Dāsa (1851–97), Rādhākṛṣṇa Dāsa (1865–1907), Pratāpa Nārāyaṇa Miśra (1856–94), Bālakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa (1844–1914), Rādhācaraṇa Gosvāmī (1858–1925) and others wrote romantic, mythological, historical or patriotic plays after the style of Bharatendu. They even attempted to write problem plays, farces and translated dramatic works from other languages, mostly from English and Bengali. Romantic plays like *Ranadhira Prema Mohinī* (1878) by Śrīnivāsa Dāsa is written in imitation of *Romeo and Juliet*. He also wrote *Prahlāda Carita* (1888), a mythological play with traits of romantic art. *Samyogitā-Svayamvara* (1886) by Śrīnivāsa Dāsa is a historical play, but it has little dramatic quality. Pratāpa Nārāyaṇa Miśra produced farces like *Kalikautuka* (1874), *Juārī-khuārī* (The Card Player, 1876) which are based on social realism. They depict the realities of society and unlike other farces do not resort to gross improbabilities in plot and characterization. *Mahārāṇī Padmāvatī* (1882) and *Mahārāṇa Pratāpa Simha* or *Rājasthāna Kesarī* (1887) are two famous historical plays written by Rādhākṛṣṇa Dāsa. He turns to history for a serious representation of the lofty ideals of nationalism. Bālakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa wrote two mythological plays, *Damayantī Svayamvara* (1892) and *Veṇīsamhāra* (1897). In *Veṇīsamhāra* he weaves the strains of contemporaneity into mythology without much success. He comes off in his form in *Jaisā Kām Vaisā Pariṇām* (As You Sow, So You Reap, 1877) but the comic loses its effect considerably under the pressure of the playwright's anxiety for social reform. Rādhācaraṇa Gosvāmī wrote historical plays like *Satī Candrāvatī* (1890) and *Amara Simha Rāṭhor* (1895) exalting our culture and tradition. None of these playwrights could, of course, break any new ground except continuing the dramatic tradition founded by Bharatendu. The thematic content, in spite of its lofty idealism, suffers from excessive emotionalism; and in the farces there are obvious marks of vulgarism. The form was a haphazard combination of classical, Parsee and western techniques which had come into Hindi plays through Bengali drama. Frequent switching over from prose to verse—a poetic effect which makes a play intense and direct—was done dexterously by Bharatendu; but his contemporaries used it without creating the desired effect. These plays do not evince any major literary achievement except that they kept this genre alive which, in due course, helped a crop of good playwrights to surface at the turn of the century.

Jai Shankar Prasad and his Era

During the first two decades of the 20th century a number of playwrights introduced a fresh outlook in the field of drama. Badrīnātha Bhaṭṭa in his play *Kuru-Vana-Dahana* (The Wild Fire that Destroyed Kauravas, 1912) introduces human motivation in a mythological tale. In its plot construction, characterization and in the comic interludes an intellectual awareness can be discerned which makes it relevant to the modern environment. His best farces like *Cuṅgī kī Umīdavārī* (Municipal Candidacy, 1919), *Miss American* (1929) and *Vivāha Vijñāpana* (Matrimonial Advertisement, 1927) are directed against social incongruities, perversities and personal idiosyncracies. Mādhava Śukla's *Mahābhārata* (1915) is also based on mythology, but with dialogues touching the fringes of reality of modern life. Sudarśana's *Añjanā* (1923) is another mythological play which marks a definite advance over the previous mythological attempts in the field by its greater stress on human motivation in plot and characterization. The Bengali and foreign dramas have been responsible for this greater emphasis on

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human motivation in mythological fables and characters. Dvijendralal Roy, the famous Bengali playwright, set a standard for the dramatists of other languages and thus exercised a wide influence on their dramatic technique. (Dr Indranātha Madān, *Modern Hindi Literature*, p. 89. The Minerva Book Shop, Lahore, 1939). *Varamālā* (The Marriage Garland, 1925) by Govinda Vallabha Pant is a successful stage-play of this time with a puranic theme dealing with the sudden change in the heroine's love into hatred and hatred into love. The stage-success of this play can be attributed to the writer's knowledge of stage-craft which he acquired as a script writer in a theatrical company (Foreword to *Varamāta*, p. 6). Then came Jaishankar Prasad (Jaya Śaṅkara 'Prasāda', 1890–1937), the pioneer Hindi playwright of the second and third decades of this century, who remains till today the greatest dramatist of Hindi. It is generally, but wrongly said that Prasad wrote closet dramas having no relevance to the stage. Of course, his disgust for the popular Parsee theatre, his nationalistic fervour and his romantic reverence for the past prompted him to create a new variety of literary drama based on historical themes. These dramas contain too many scenes at too many places covering a long time span and are generally written in a highly poetic language. But all this does not make them unstageable. Prasad rebelled against the cheap commercialism, melodrama and street language of the Parsee plays. The conflict in his dramas is provided by a clash between his idealistic romantic temper and the hard realities of life by which he was surrounded. He used history to reconcile the ideal with the real which helped him to portray the present day problems against a historical background. He lays greater emphasis on the national traits of his historical characters to infuse in his countrymen by suggestion, the spirit of sacrifice, valour and dedication to higher values at that critical juncture in the history of our nation. He chose the Gupta period for his plays which provided an ample opportunity to voice the sentiments of patriotism. He had also the foresight to project history into our presentday life with a view to probing deeper into the eternal problems of human nature. As true classics his plays belong to the present age as also to all times.

Prasad wrote twelve plays and nearly all with historical themes. In 1921 he wrote his first real play *Viśākha*. The theme is taken from *Rājataraṅgiṇī* dealing with the decadent period of Buddhist history. His other earlier plays are *Ajātaśatru* (1922), *Kāmanā* (1923–24), *Janamejaya kā Nāgayajña* (Janamejaya's Serpent-sacrifice, 1926). In the last phase of his literary career, he wrote his masterpieces namely, *Skandagupta* (1928), *Eka Ghūṁṭa* (A Mouthful, 1929), *Candragupta* (1931) and *Dhruvasvāminī* (1933). *Eka Ghūṁṭa* is a one-act play.

In *Candragupta*, Prasad chose the Gupta period to depict the rise and growth of Indian nationhood against the background of foreign invasions and political intrigues. Chanakya, the master-mind and the king-maker during the Maurya period not only succeeds in uniting India as one nation under Chandragupta but also shrewdly resolves all internal conflicts by making Rakshasa the chief minister of Chandragupta and at the same time brings to an end the long-ranging war with the Greeks by solemnising the marriage of the Greek Commander's daughter Cornelia with Chandragupta. Prasad has tried to be faithful to history without renouncing his right to make use of historical imagination. That being the reason, all his imaginary characters impart to history a human colour by enriching modern sensibilities with those ideals and values which have preserved the continuity of our culture for thousands of years. In *Skandagupta* the king Skanda provides leadership at a crucial time of discontent and faction-fighting within the kingdom threatened by enemies from abroad. The failure of Skandagupta in his personal life as opposed to his overwhelming victories over the enemy and the consolidation of the Gupta empire is effectively shown at the end where Skanda is left forlorn all by himself on the stage. This play has the potential of a dark comedy and a gay tragedy depending upon which way the Director gives it a twist while producing the last scene. The focal point of the play is the characterization of Skandagupta. The tension and conflict are depicted through the clash between his temperament and the hand of destiny.

The structure of the play *Candragupta* is based on Shakespeare's non-realistic approach. Prasad became conversant with him through the Bengali playwright D. L. Roy who was extremely popular on account of his overtones of sentimental nationalism and his flair for the romantic drama. Roy uses this theme but perhaps with greater dramatic skill with only eleven characters from history to suit his artistic ends. Prasad has introduced as many as thirty characters to be authentic in historical details, whereby dramatic intensity is largely lost. But the unfolding of an authentic history against a big background has its own charm. The play *Skandagupta* has a peculiar structural beauty which can blend harmoniously with a formal set. The way the action moves and yet focuses the attention on Skandagupta at the close of every act is something which makes Prasad a dramatist of rare technical skill. His device of juxtaposing parallel characters is demonstrated in this play. He does not show many faces of the same character, like modern dramatists. He gives different names to different faces: Skandagupta and Bhaṭṭārka are two characters, both valiant and powerful, but one sinks low for his ambition and the other rises high despite his lack of ambition. The dramatic structure of his play *Dhruvasvāminī* is, by far, the most composed and skilfully woven. The play is historical and deals with the place and rights of woman in society. Dhruvaswamini is treated by Ramagupta, not like a human being but as the personal property of the husband. In the end, she is liberated by Chandragupta. This play in a way agg-

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roaches the realism of Ibsen and the problem in *A Doll's House* is not essentially different from that of *Dhruvasvāminī*. Being a romantic poet he has tender, lovelorn poetical women characters in his plays. In *Dhruvasvāminī* a similar character Komā, lends charm to many a dramatic situation. Prasad is undoubtedly the greatest Hindi playwright, who dived deep into the basic problems of human nature.

Another historical playwright of the Prasad era is Hari Krishna Premi (b. 1908) who borrows themes from history which have a bearing on contemporary problems. He was a true Gandhian who wrote plays to propagate Hindu-Muslim unity and religious tolerance. His plays *Svarṇa Vihāna* (The Golden Morning, 1930), *Rakṣābandhana* (1934), *Pātālavijayā* (Victory over Patala, 1936), *Pratiśodha* (Revenge, 1937), *Śivāsādhanā* (Shivaji's Penance, 1937) justify and support the Gandhian ideology. In *Rakṣābandhana* the widow of Rāṇā Sāṅgā, Karmāvatī, sends a *rākhī* to Humayun, seeking protection against the ruler of Gujarat. Humayun, against the wishes of his ministers, comes to Udaypur but reaches there after she had committed *satī* (immolated herself). Humayun, seeing the ashes of that brave lady, who had become his sister by virtue of a Hindu ritual says,

> May the fire of the funeral pyre of my sister
> Karmāvatī produce feelings of religious tolerance.

In other plays also Premi picks up such incidents from the history of the Muslim period to focus attention on communal unity. The plot structure, dialogues and dramatic style are definitely less complicated and more natural than in the plays of Prasad and have a more direct impact on the spectators. But these are purposeful plays which produce a temporary effect on the viewers. They can never be compared with the plays of Prasad having lofty idealism, sublime philosophy of life, extended metaphor and dramatic intensity.

Pre-Independence Theatre

Modernity in Hindi theatre is supposed to start with Upendranath Ashk (Upendranātha Aśka). But it was really Lakshmi Narayana Misra (b. 1903), of the Prasad era, who laid its foundation by depicting the life of the individual man and woman in the new social conditions. He set the trend for the rise of the problem play in Hindi, being influenced by Ibsen and Shaw with their intellectual approach to life (Introduction to *Sanyāsī*, pp. 2, 3, 7). In the prefaces to his plays he makes it amply clear why he reacts against the romantic idealism of Prasad and revolts against the historical drama which does not solve the problems of the day (Preface to *Rākṣasa kā Mandira*).

Shaw who has ridiculed the snobbery and hypocrisy of pseudo-respectable classes has exerted great influence on Lakshmi Narayana Misra and other young Indian playwrights of his time (R. K. Yājñika, *The Indian Theatre*, 1933, Allen & Unwin, London, p. 234). But surprisingly enough, his reaction against the romantic drama as professed in his prefaces and other writings does not show up as clearly in his plays where he remains more an idealist than a realist. Shaw cuts at the root of the social evils and encourages us to review ethical norms. Lakshmi Narayan Misra also talks against social evils but does not take up any courageous measure against the traditional norms. The conflict between romantic idealism and realistic intellectualism is more than obvious in his plays wherein he is unable to discard sentimentalism completely. His *Sanyāsī* (Ascetic, 1929), *Rākṣasa kā Mandira* (The Temple of the Demon, 1932) and *Mukti kā Rahasya* (The Secret of Salvation, 1932) are all social plays dealing with the problem of love. In *Sanyāsī*, Mālatī, a young college girl, falls in love with her classmate but marries a professor. The disappointed young man becomes an ascetic. In *Rākṣasa kā Mandira* he depicts the lives of unprincipled pleasure-seekers and the mockery which they make of filial institutions. In *Mukti kā Rahasya* he leads a tirade against the false ideals of duty, marriage, monogamy and romantic love. His best play, however, is *Sindūr kī Holī* (1943) exposing corruption which had made inroads into the official class, resulting in total frustration and misery.

The realist in Misra wants to represent life as he sees it, but the idealist in him dreams of a better world. In stagecraft, of course, he is more a realist. The dialogue is seldom poetical, it is broken and fragmentary as in real life. He avoids frequent use of asides, and soliloquies and does not introduce any song for entertainment. He uses the naturalistic stage setting and as exits and entrances are not manipulated in real life, he dispenses with the scenic construction of the play. In spite of all these his strong idealism has such an all pervading effect on his conception that the theme and character of his plays seem to be absolutely shadowed by it.

Upendranath Ashk (b. 1910) is the first representative playwright of the modern era. His modernism is not, like his predecessors', a compound of the revolutionary and the conservative, the naturalistic and the idealistic, the romantic and the realistic. His modernism is marked by his realistic representation of the life around him. Initially in *Jaya Parājaya* (Victory and Defeat, 1937) he is unable to come out of the framework of idealism to accept social realities as they are. But in *Chaṭhā Beṭā* (The Sixth Son, 1940) there is no confusion. He defines the problem with clarity and breaks through conventions. None of the six sons is ready to keep the retired father with him. The old conventional bonds are missing. If at all there exists one it is the bond of money which alone can bind father and sons together. It is a painful acceptance of the belief that the old

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tenets of culture are no more effective. It suggests that new relationships are developing under the pressures of time. The play *Kaid* (The Prisoner, 1945) and *Uḍān* (The Flight, 1946) are complementary to each other. In the first play it is the woman who is a prisoner of the rigid social customs and in the second, she sets herself free from its clutches. All these, including *Bhanvar* (The Whirlpool, 1950), are psychological and problem-oriented plays dealing with the middle-and lower middle-class families. His best play is *Añjo Dīdī* (Anjo, the Elder Sister, 1954) wherein Añjo, the central character, who is obsessed by mechanical precision turns her husband into a machine. He can't stand the strain and commits suicide. The play reflects the strains of a technological age. In the use of language Ashk meticulously avoids romantic expressions and uses everyday speech. He, however, fails to evince an intense awareness of the deeper human problems.

With Ashk realism became a dominant tendency in drama and playwrights like Prithvinath Sharma in his *Dvividhā* (Dilemma, 1938), *Aparādhī* (The Culprit, 1934) and *Sādhu* (A Hermit, 1944) or Uday Shankar Bhatta in his *Antahīna Anta* (The Endless End, 1938) or Seth Govind Das in his *Tyāga yā Grahaṇa* (Sacrifice or Acceptance, 1943) and *Prema yā Pāpa* (Love or Sin, 1946) followed suit in their own ways. But they are not realists in the true sense of the term. Without being objective realists they reflect a particular standard of morals and use their plays to convey some social purpose and a criticism of current social values. All these dramatists have their own idealism—social or political—and apply it to their characters and situations in the play. Bhatta in his verse-play *Matsyagandhā* (1937) remains an idealist till the end. But their sense of stagecraft kept the tradition of Hindi theatre alive and as a result, after Independence, we find in *Konārka* (1951), a historical play truly depicting a vital problem of the age by Jagdish Chandra Mathur—the conflict of the haves and the have-nots and the tension in the creative mind. Mathur was, in fact, the first among modern Hindi writers who responded to the demand for meaningful plays by establishing close contact with the stage. Since his *Konārka*, a new era starts in modern drama with new complexities focusing sharply on the life-style and the agony of the age.

Modern Era of Plays after Independence

Andhāyuga (The Blind Age, 1954) is a powerful verse-play by Dharamvir Bharati (Dharmavīra Bhāratī) which starts on the eve of the last day of the battle of Mahabharata and ends with the death of Krishna which leaves the universe totally dark and desolate possessing no inherent human truth, value or meaning. This is the effect of the war on the individual as well as society leaving behind an atmosphere of moral turpitude, hatred, greed, lust for power, vanity and hypocrisy. It, thereby, projects the dehumanizing effect of war which has its own relevance for the present times. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is blind physically. Aśvatthāmā is blind with hatred. Sañjaya's neutrality is also a kind of blindness. Vidura is doubtful about the reality of life. The lack of determination in Yuyutsu makes him useless. Even the so-called common people represented by two palace guards who are unconcerned about the happenings around them are unable to escape the doom. War does not spare anybody including Krishna who loses his godly virtues by becoming a party to the violation of human principles of justice and fairness. Though the playwright has designed it to be a 'tale of light through the actions of blind people', it ends in a total collapse of values with the death of Lord Krishna. This dual role assigned to Krishna who fails as a god and yet remains the precursor of the dawn, provides the play with its basic dramatic tension. The optimism of Lord Krishna described by the *yācaka* after the former's death, that the future lies in the hands of man himself who can shape it the way he likes, sounds like a soothing message for this world of hatred, disbelief and selfishness. But it does not fit into the structure of the play and appears to be contrived. The play really leaves behind an effect of total moral collapse and therein lies its power.

Bharati gives to his play an effective dramatic setting making use of many techniques and devices of the old Indian dramatics. The use of several pairs of narrators and listeners at a time for exposition of the argument, linking together of different episodes, simultaneous and parallel action, constant yet smooth change of locale and several other devices are exploited quite imaginatively by the author. Similarly, he explores some theatrical symbols—such as those of 'beastliness' and 'blindness' and makes use of them for dramatic effect. His language has an unusually evocative quality combining poetic intensity with the spontaneity of the spoken word. It recreates the past without losing its hold on modern dimensions. The play *Eka Kaṇṭha Viṣapāyī* (A Throat which has Drunk Poison, 1963) by Dushyanta Kumar also deals with the devastating consequences of war. But unlike *Andhāyuga*, he makes it a purposeful play by effecting a compromise on the pattern of Gandhian ethics. It, of course, provides a new dimension to the mythological episode of the self-immolation of Sati, the divine spouse of Lord Siva. The bereavement provokes him to take revenge and he declares war against the gods. Lord Vishnu intervenes and tactfully avoids the complete destruction which might have resulted otherwise. The plot could have been exploited to create better dramatic effects but the playwright unfortunately fails. It seems that he is more interested in underlining our lack of courage to face the reality. This deliberation mars the effect of the play. Its language is flat; dramatic imagery is not concrete enough for a modern play.

With Mohan Rakesh (Mohana Rākeṣa, 1925–72) Hindi drama makes a departure from pseudo-modernism and

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traditional symbolism to the drama of 'non-communication'—the modern man's failure to understand himself or to understand the other person and their mutual failure to understand each other, which is the real tragedy of modern life. The breakdown of communication is handled with a concentration, intensity and subtlety rare in the earlier Hindi drama.

Āṣāḍha kā Eka Dina (One Day in the Ashadha Month, 1958) is a play about the life of the great Sanskrit poet Kalidasa and his love for a simple village girl before and after he rose to eminence. Kalidasa is an embodiment of the creative artist effectively depicting many facets of the modern man. He is obsessed with the problem of the creative mind which emanates from a conflict between art and personal emotion, between his creative ego and his alter ego characterized by Viloma, and between his action and feeling. Ultimately Kalidasa comes to Mallikā, who had never ceased to love him, only to leave her for ever, thereby effectively bringing out the dilemma of the modern man who is caught in the web of an identity crisis. The structure of the play has poetic realism and presents the outer and inner reality in the form of an artistic tension. The play is full of modern references touching many aspects of contemporary life. But they are not allowed to encroach on the 'poetry of situation'. The theatrical poetry of its language has a fully evolved dramatic idiom which makes it a landmark in Hindi drama.

In the second play, *Laharom kā Rājahaṁsa* (Swan of the Waves, 1963) Rakesh again uses historical material to explore the restlessness and inner conflict of the present man in search of his own identity. The conflict is presented with reference to the man-woman relationship which ultimately breaks down because of the failure of communication and understanding. The Buddha's younger brother Nanda and his wife Sundari are the main characters. Sundari has a direct conflict with Nanda and fails to win him over. Nanda, ultimately, embraces the philosophy of Buddhist renunciation but stands as a forlorn man in utter confusion. The intention of Rakesh in delineating our predicament by means of a historical theme is to suggest that the tension is rooted not in time but in human nature (R. N. Nigam, 'Playwright in Perspective', *Enact*, 23 November 1969). Theatrically the conflict does not crystallize fully in this play but the dramatic idiom registers a significant advance.

The crisis of identity and breakdown of communication in human relations and the resultant tragic effect of boredom and despair constitute again the theme of Rakesh's next play *Ādhe Adhūre* (The Half and Incomplete, 1969) which is, by far, his best play devastatingly exposing the fragmented personalities and broken images in a decomposing society. The play deals with a disintegrating middle-class family which revolves around Savitri, the wife of an unsuccessful man. She has three children representing the self-centred generation of today. The wife wants to save the sinking family but is disillusioned. Her search for a complete man remains unsuccessful. In fact, she meets a couple of men who turn out to be the alter egos of her husband. In the end, the veil of self-deception is removed. Both the husband and the wife are found to be destined to live a condemned life in a social prison with no exit. Alienated from each other but at the same time staying together as broken images with unresolved conflicts and tensions these characters hover on the middle-class level of existentialism. Rakesh in his prologue argues that what matters is not the individual and all the subtle attributes that define his personality—what he is himself and none else. It is the 'situation' that is supreme. This play is the play of crisis depicting the hopelessness and helplessness of human existence. The language of the play is simple and yet dramatically intense.

Contemporary Hindi drama draws closer to the domestic actualities of the middle class picking up situations that dramatize the frustrations and compromises in the man-woman relationship. If modern man is to know himself fully this can be done only in relation to others. That relationship is broken and there is no way out to mend it again. One of the most fundamental links between people is everyday speech; but in spite of its constant flow in the play it remains so banal that people seem to be unknown to each other. Sex provides another fundamental opportunity for relationship between human beings; but that is completely demythified in contemporary Hindi drama.

Lalit Sagal's *Hatyā Eka Ākāra kī* (The Murder of a Figure, 1968) is a symbolic presentation exploring the likely motives and inner tensions of those who committed the brutal act of murdering Mahatma Gandhi. This is a thoughtful play, and arguments here are presented with understanding, reflecting a certain dramatic tension. But the characters are thin and one-dimensional and the basic structure of the play lacks necessary depth and complexity. Jñānadeva Agnihotri in his *Śuturmurga* (Ostrich, 1968) satirizes the total bankruptcy of the first 20 years of Indian political life. This is symbolically represented by the golden image of an ostrich. Questions like personal freedom and responsibility of the state are raised in this play where the ruler of Śuturnagarī squanders away the entire resources of the country first to build and then in order to save himself, to demolish this image, only to find that it was never built by his corrupt ministers. The play vividly displays our political situation but at the human level it lacks depth and insight which can be sustained only by unusual and imaginative theatrical devices. Among recent playwrights Surendra Verma, L. N. Lal and Mani Madhukar are outstanding.

A total view of the contemporary Hindi drama indicates no dearth of dramatic activity. In content and form it has variety and depth which makes us hopeful of its bright future. It is no more confined to textbooks. The Hindi

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playwrights have gradually responded to the demand for meaningful plays based on the contemporary life of the nation which includes not merely the present but everything of the past which has relevance to the present. They are quite conscious of the stagecraft which by itself is a happy augury because without a developed technique significant drama is not possible.

One-Act Plays

Since the coming of the radio in 1937 in India the one-act play is proving to be a fecund art form. Almost every dramatist has some one-act plays to his credit. Any subject-matter, whether a hilarious incident or a social commitment, a historical footnote or a family anecdote, a news item or a wayward flight of fancy is enough to sustain a one-act play. The first significant one-act play in Hindi is *Eka Ghūṁṭa* (1929) written by Jayashankar Prasad; but this short drama in its technique is more akin to the old *rūpakas* like Vyāyoga, Bhāṇa, Nāṭyarāsaka of the Sanskrit dramaturgy. One-act plays as a form of artistic expression has come to us from the West and Bhuvaneswar made it popular.

Bhuvaneswar wrote his first one-act play *Śyāmā: A Marriage Mockery* in 1933 which was published in *Hamsa*, the most popular magazine of the time. Later on it was published in the collection of his one-act plays under the title *Kārvāṁ* (Caravan, 1935). In his earlier one-act plays the influence of Shaw and Ibsen is much too evident. The theme is social reform. He attacks the marriage institution and other related traditional customs and ceremonials. Human situations in crucial moments of tension and conflict are etched with dramatic intensity. His *Ūsara* (Barren, 1934) and *Tāṁbe ke Kīḍe* (Insects of Copper, 1946) are remarkable for their presentation with acrimony and modern sensibility, the mode of despair and hackneyed life full of absurdities.

Ramkumar Verma comes next though his first play *Bādal kī Mṛtyu* (The Death of a Cloud) was written as early as 1930. Some of his famous one-act plays are *Pṛthvīrāj kī Āṁkheṁ* (1936), *Rēśamī Tāī* (The Silk Tie, 1941), *Cārumitrā* (1942), *Saptakiraṇa* (Seven Rays, 1947), *Rūparaṅga* (Beauty, 1948), *Dhruvatārikā* (The Pole Star, 1950), *Ṛturāja* (The King of Seasons, 1961), *Indradhanuṣa* (The Rainbow, 1955), *Rimjhim* (Drizzling, 1955). His early plays are rather informative; but in his later plays he is motivated by an urge to depict the middle-class family life and its problems and consequently a larger view of life is projected. However, he normally fails to project the deeper problems of life. His historical one-act plays like *Pṛthvīrāj kī Āṁkheṁ*, *Cārumitrā*, *Kaumudī Mahotsava* (Festival of the Moon) and *Saptakiraṇa* are romantic plays interwoven with melancholy and idealism but the total impact remains superficial. His popularity is confined to the stage of the schools and colleges. During this period Seṭh Govinda Dāsa and Hari Krishna Premi wrote many one-act plays based on social or historical themes with idealistic or political undertones. Udaya Shankara Bhatta's one-act plays are mostly written as text-books. 'Their historical or social content serves as mere premises for arriving at a predetermined conclusion, which in every case is didactic and moralistic.'

Upendranath Ashk is the next one-act playwright, after Bhuvaneswar, who makes a determined effort to use this art form for portraying the manifold problems of middle-class life. His plays possess literary quality along with realistic touches. His first play *Pāpī* (The Sinner, 1937) was published in *Viśāla Bhāratī*. The first collection of his plays *Caravāhe* (Shepherds, 1947) makes use of the symbolic technique to solve the problems connected with human psychology. *Pardā Haṭāo, Pardā Girāo* (Raise the Curtain, Lower the Curtain, 1951) is a collection of humorous plays. Ashk seems quite concerned about the stageability of these plays. J. C. Mathur in his *Bhor kā Tārā* (Morning Star) and Viṣṇu Prabhākar in his *Insān* (Man), *Mā kā Beṭā* (Mother's Son), *Kyā Vah Doṣī Thā* (Was He a Culprit) deal with the peripheries of modern life, without delving into the intricacies of human psyche. These plays have been staged and featurized on AIR several times.

Lakṣmī Nārāyaṇa Lāl in his one-act plays *Tāj Mahal kā Āṁsū* (Tears of Taj Mahal), *Parvata ke Pīche* (Behind the Mountain) and *Nāṭaka Bahuraṅgī* (A Colourful Drama) tries to introduce novelty into the one-act play; but at times because of unnecessary outstretching of the theme, weak dialogues and mannerisms, the intensity of dramatic effect gets lost. Dharam Vir Bharati in his collection *Nadī Pyāsī Thī* (The River was Thirsty) gives evidence of a talented playwright who is in search of some forms of meaningful theatrical expression. While *Āvāz ka Nitam* is an interesting dramatic monologue and *Nīlī Jhīl* (The Blue Pond) a romantic fantasy, the short play *Nadī Pyāsī Thī* attempts to project an ironic situation in the life of four young persons. These short plays reveal Bharati's feel and search for an effective language for the theatre. The other playwrights are Vinod Rastogi, Agñeya, Bhārata Bhūṣaṇa Agarwāl, Devrāj Dineś, Revatī Śaraṇa Śarmā, Vimal Luthra and others who have made sincere efforts to write meaningful radio plays or one-act plays. Most of them, however, are not able to portray the complexities of modern life with literary finesse. The unimaginative and indiscriminate use of all sorts of theatrical devices fails to make this art-form theatrically viable.

The Hindi Theatre

It is a truism that theatre like water finds its own course. If it is not properly directed, it often takes the wrong route. Initially, because of the continued absence of a stage, Hindi drama could not flourish. 'A play that has

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never found a theatre', says J. B. Priestly, 'is not really a play at all. A dramatist is a writer who works in and for a theatre...a dramatist must have actors and audiences in order to realize himself; thus he must come to terms with the theatre of his time.' The first Hindi play ever performed was *Jānakī Maṅgala* of Śītalā Prasāda Tivārī in 1868 in Vārāṇāsī. Dramatists like Harishchandra and Pratap Narayan Misra themselves acted in this play. This was followed by *Raṇadhira-Prema Mohinī* of Śrīniwāsa Dāsa and *Satya Hriścandra* of Harishchandra. (K. B. Jindal, *A History of Hindi Literature*, Allahabad, 1955, pp. 279–80).

Harishchandra waged a war against the cheap and derogatory trend of the Parsee Hindi theatre and made a sincere effort to build up a stage in the cities of Allahabad and Vārāṇāsī. During this time Bhārat Vyākul and the Sūr Vijaya companies were set up. Bishambhar Sahai's *Gautama Buddha* and Rādhey Śyam's *Uṣā-Aniruddha* were the two very successful plays presented by these companies, respectively. Apart from these two professional companies, amateur dramatic societies were also founded in Allahabad, Vārāṇāsī and Kanpur which were patronized by persons like Mādhava Śukla, Ānand Prasād Khattrī, Haridās Mānik, Jamunā Dās Mehra and others. But in spite of all this the Hindi theatre without proper guidance could not put down its roots in society. Jaya Shankar Prasad, with all his sound knowledge of stagecraft could not attract the masses. However, he did yeoman service to drama by giving it a rich literary form and content. Then comes the Prithvi Theatre founded by Prithvi Raj Kapoor. He made a valient effort to combine popular appeal with purposefulness. Almost at the same time the People-Theatre Group emerged on the scene. This group staged plays to effect social change. But these stray efforts were not sufficient to give Hindi drama a live stage with the result that the playwrights followed the easier way, the way to the library and the classroom.

After Independence, there was an awakening in the theatre and a number of amateur groups came into existence. A few of them did a remarkable job in making Hindi drama relevant to the stage. The National School of Drama under E. Alkazi's direction started staging plays with a wide range of modern techniques. Ramesh Mehta with his slapstick comedies, Om Shiva Puri, Syamanand Jalan, Satya Dev Dube with their effective productions of serious contemporary Hindi plays and a large number of amateur groups at Lucknow, Allahabad, Bhopal, Delhi and other places attracted the audience to the evolving Hindi theatre. Hindi theatre now can boast of competent actors and directors. Still, the fact remains that it has yet to grow to the dimensions of a movement and create its own traditions. Hindi theatre must thrive on a proper knowledge of the theories of the Sanskrit theatre and the time-honoured folk traditions and then combine them with the attainments of the western theatre.

At the same time it should encourage playwrights to focus their attention more and more on Indian themes and problems. As our modern theatre becomes progressively more involved with themes which are peculiarly Indian, appropriate techniques of production will automatically follow. Only then can it become a real force and establish itself as a distinctive theatre movement in world drama.

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Kannada

H. K. RAMACHANDRA MURTHY

Of all the literary forms in Kannada, drama seems to have been the last to arrive. Amongst the early surviving plays in Kannada the oldest is Singararya's (Singarārya) *Mitravindā-Gōvindā* (c. 1685). Singararya was a poet in the Court of Chikkadevaraja Wodeyar (1672–1704), the illustrious ruler of Mysore. Literary historians in Kannada are surprised that there should have been no drama in earlier times. Perhaps there did exist some kind of a theatrical tradition earlier in the Kannada country, but no dramatic works of those centuries have survived. Nijaguna Sivayogi

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(15th century), a mystic poet and an authority on musicology, has referred in his *Vivēka Cintāmaṇi* to some traditional modes of histrionic expression. The Kannada poet Ratnakara Varni (1550–?) makes use of terms like *pūrya nāṭaka* (the prelude) and *uttara nāṭaka* (the epilogue), thereby implying a knowledge of the dramatic form.

Forms of folk-drama must also have existed for a long time, before they decayed owing to lack of patronage and changing manners.

The Folk Theatre

The folk theatre of Karnataka is chiefly made up of the *Bayalāṭa* (the field drama), which is generally divided into *Doḍḍāṭa* (the big play) and *Sannāṭa* (the little play). *Doḍḍāṭa* itself has two variations: *Yakṣagāna* of the *paduvala pāya* (the western variety) and the *mūdala pāya* (the eastern variety). *Yakṣagāna* is the folk form confined to the South and North Canara districts of Karnataka. There are references to 'pagarana' in *Kavirāja Mārga*, a work of poetics going back to the 9th century. 'Pagarana' was probably one form of *Yakṣagāna*. During the Golden Age of the Vijayanagar Empire, *Yakṣagāna* and other forms were acclaimed as distinctly national forms. Later it found a permanent home in the coastal districts of Karnataka. The *mūdala pāya* is still popular in north Karnataka.

There are many similarities between the eastern and the western varieties of *Doḍḍāṭa*. In so far as the *pūrvaraṅga* (the prologue), the introduction of the characters, the theme, the costumes and the emotional content are concerned there is little or no difference between the two forms. Both make use of heroic stories from mythology and popular romances. Even the comic character, the Sarathi of the *mūdala pāya*, looks like a cousin-germane of Hanumanayaka of the *Yakṣagāna*. Both forms are highly stylized in production. The chief difference between the two varieties lies in the musical style. In the *mūdala pāya* form there is greater emphasis on the spoken word than on songs and music whereas *Yakṣagāna* depends mostly on its music and dance. The stylized gestures and dance pattern in *Yakṣagāna* is reminiscent of *Bharata Nāṭyam* and *Kathakaḷi* though *Yakṣagāna* has acquired and preserved its own distinction. The dance pattern in *mūdala pāya* seems to follow the footwork of *Kōlāṭa* and is less sophisticated than its western counterpart.

Bayalāṭa. The *Bayalāṭa* forms display spectacular showmanship. They use instruments like *chande*, *maddaḷe* and other harsh drums. The costumes comprise flamboyant headgear, bejewelled and gold-laced jackets, dhoti and waist bands. The whole idea is to create the effect of remoteness and fantasy by stressing the larger-than-life nature of the characters.

Sannāṭa. The purpose of the *Sannāṭa* was to guide common people by preaching moral lessons relating to their everyday conduct. However, in course of time, love stories and devotional pieces were also adapted. Sometimes they dealt with historic and religious characters like Kabir and Allama Prabhu. In recent years, social themes have come in handy and plays like *Sangyā Bāḷya* and *Rūpa Siṅga* have become popular. Sometimes these playforms were used for religious propaganda and publicity. Some of these plays resemble extended jokes (tamāśa), which actually inspired the *Tamāśas* of the Marathi folk theatre. In *Sannāṭa*, the players wore simple costumes and their quick, racy dialogue was in keeping with the secular themes and realistic atmosphere which the plays tried to represent.

Yakṣagāna. Like the European opera, the *Yakṣagāna* is predominantly a dance and musical form of drama. It portrays heroic stock characters from history and mythology and attempts to evoke heroic emotions. It is performed in an open field on a small platform enclosed on three sides with a simple curtain covering the front. The actors use dazzling make-up and wear resplendent costumes and stage an all-night show. The *Bhāgavatha* narrates the story through songs while the players dance the sequence to the accompaniment of loud drums. Women do not usually take part in these shows and men play the women's roles. The play begins with the *Bhāgavatha*'s invocation to Lord Ganesha, to the accompaniment of *tāḷa*. The *Bhāgavatha* is supported by a chorus of singers. Stock characters like the Fool (or the clown) commence the story and then disappear. Then the main characters emerge, one by one. Throughout the performance the *Bhāgavatha* accompanies them with his *taḷā* and singing. Thus, these shows are a combination of song and stylized dance. Writers like Parthi Subba and Nandalike Laxminarayanappa (pseud.: Muddana, 1870–1901) used the form with virtuosity.

A precise account of the history of Kannada drama can begin only with *Mitrāvinda Gōvinda*. This work is based on *Ratnāvaḷi*, the Sanskrit play of Sriharsha (Śrīharṣa, 590–647), although the dramatist has not acknowledged this. *Mitrāvindā Gōvinda* has all the features of a romantic comedy, such as love, intrigue, mistaken identity and sudden conversion. The Kannada play faithfully follows the Sanskrit original, except for the change of characters and their names. The play is filled with cheap clowning and the translation is at times inaccurate and rather strained. While the style of the original play is elegant and smooth, the old Kannada style adapted in the translation is turgid and even pedantic. Its significance is more historical.

The Preparation for Modern Drama

The Kanarese theatre and drama came into existence

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almost simultaneously. Most of the early playwrights wrote for very popular professional troupes. The professional theatre was dominated by great actors and both the rural and the urban spectators went to see their favourite stars. Dramatists like Bellave Narahari Sastri (Beḷḷāve Narahari Śāstri, 1882–1961) were the only exceptions, to attract audiences in their own right.

The Professional Theatre. Some of the elements of the Folk Theatre, such as the use of stock characters like the *sūtradhāra*, the clown and the heroic mythological characters, must have shaped the form and content of professional drama.

In its early stages the Kannada theatre drew profitably on Sanskrit and European dramas. That was the heyday of the translator. In 1882, a troupe of Parsee players called 'The Bālivāla Company' visited the royal court of Mysore. The company made use of spectacular and even sophisticated devices in its productions. Obviously this historic visit inspired potential players and playwrights. Consequently, the first-ever professional theatre in Karnataka, Sri Chamarajendra Karnataka Nataka Sabha took shape (1880). Court scholars translated Sanskrit plays for the court troupe. The illustrious Basavappa Sastry (Basavappa Śāstri, 1843–91) did six translations, his Kannada rendering of Kalidasa's *Śākuntala* being his *magnum opus*. The highest tribute that can be paid to this work is that it does not read like a translation. Churamuri Ṣeshagiri Rao's (Curamuri Śēṣagiri Rāvu, 1827–84) musical *Śākuntala* (1869) was a stage version of the play. It was the very first translation of Kalidasa's play into Kannada. Most of the stanzas and even the prose of the original play were rendered into popular tunes and sung. Among the scholar-translators of the time may be mentioned Devasikhamani Alasingracharya (1878–1940), whose renderings of Bhasa's plays are even today considered to be the best in the series. The plays of Bhavabhuti, Visakhadatta's *Murda Rākṣasa*, Sudraka's *Mṛccha Kaṭika* and Bhattanarayana's *Vēṇi Samhāra* were all translated. These translations later stimulated original writing.

However, the attempts to translate Shakespeare were not so rewarding as those of the Sanskrit plays. But Kerur Vasudevachar's (1866–1921) translation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and M. L. Srikantes Gauda's (Srīkaṇṭēs Gauḍa, 1852–1926) translations of *Macbeth* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* achieved some success.

Northern Karnataka. The theatre in the northern part of Karnataka had begun to throb with activity thanks to the influence of the Parsee Theatre and the Marathi Stage. A number of professional companies of strolling players came into being. In Sakkari Balacharya (Sakkari Bālācārya, 1856–1920), or 'Santakavi' as he was known, the theatrical movement found a pillar of strength. His knowledge of theatre was mainly derived from the *Bayalāṭa*, the folk form. Santakavi employed very simple language and his strength lay in his dialogue. Playwrights like Santakavi generally belonged to the realistic tradition, which sometimes produced bizarre effects. For instance, in *Uṣāpaharaṇa* (The Abduction of Usha, 1874), Bāṇāsura, the demon king, talks to his army commander in Urdu, as the latter is cast as a Muslim. The playwright reveals a greater sense of artistry in another mythological play of his, *Vatsalāharaṇa* (1875). This play turned out to be a great theatrical success owing to its spectacular and rapid action.

Bellave Narahari Sastri was an illustrious name in the professional theatre of old Mysore. He wrote mostly for the troupe headed by the late Gubbi Veeranna. Sastri's best work is his mythological plays, although he tried his hand at historical and social dramas as well. His *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Pārijāta* (1932) was a memorable triumph. The play deals with the theme of pride and shows how retribution overtakes all those who fall a prey to pride, vanity and meanness. Insolent Indra is punished by Narada, whose own insolence is humbled by Krishna. Sastri had an impeccable sense of the theatre. He could manage racy dialogue effortlessly and combine three or four plots in a play with admirable artistry. Such artistry was rather rare in those days, especially in the professional theatre where the emphasis was on received values like moral edification and entertainment.

The social plays of the age depicted the evils of drunkenness and child marriage. The professional theatre specialized in melodrama, music and evocation of heroic passions.

Those were the days of great actors. Northern Karnataka presented a veritable galaxy of professional players and troupes. Of them, Konnurkar's Śrī Kāda Siddēswara Sangīta Nāṭaka Maṇḍali (1901–32) and Shirahatti Venkoba Rao's Śrī Mahālaxmi Prasādita Nāṭaka Maṇḍali (1913–35) deserve special mention. The professional theatre exhibited a good deal of horseplay and crude humour. A great showman like Gubbi Veeranna with his unbounded love of spectacle brought 'real' horses and chariots on the stage. Spectacle and realism captivated the unsophisticated spectators.

In a set-up in which people enjoyed the realistic and melodramatic plays of the professional theatre, there appeared a dramatist of genius. 'Sami' or Venkatadri Iyer (Veṅkaṭādri Aiyyar, 1898–1939), who is best known as 'Samsa', was a phenomenal character. He was something of a paranoid and died tragically. He wrote scores of historical dramas based on the history of the Mysore kings. He is said to have destroyed almost all his plays in a fit of frenzy and only six have survived. He was well versed in Sanskrit and used the traditional form of the Sanskrit drama. He used splendid old Kannada diction, which is highly Sanskritized. The characters of Samsa are all larger

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than life and hence his language sounds natural and appropriate from the lips of those mighty giants of his. Samsa had a rich and powerful imagination and the conflicting passions, the spectacular scenes and the thrilling episodes he created made for excellent theatre.

Vigaḍa Vikrama (The Wicked Vikrama, 1933) of Samsa is an intricate study in evil. Vikrama has established his sway over the affairs of the palace and the state. He is the *de facto* monarch of Mysore and the king, Raja Wodeyar II, is merely a titular ruler. Vikrama is wickedness incarnate. He exhibits courage and subtle cunning in asserting his authority and subjugating his opponents. When the king tries to expose Vikrama's misdeeds and assume power, Vikrama becomes more sinister and revengeful. When the king falls ill, Vikrama gets the palace physician to poison him. The Queen Mother discovers the plot but is unable to foil it. Vikrama has the prince, Ranadheera Kantirava, moved to the capital from Teraknambi and under house arrest. He intends to make the prince the next puppet king. Meanwhile, the prince's friends arrive in the Capital in disguise. While they are hatching a plot to kill Vikrama, two zealous and officious servants of the palace waylay Vikrama at midnight and hack him to death. And Ranadheera succeeds to the throne.

Samsa's energy burns at high voltage when he conceives historical characters and situations and conjures spectacle. The professional theatre also used to present historical dramas. But there was no depth of characterization and plot. Samsa redeemed the historical play from the dust and din of the professional theatre and transformed it into something rich and strange. He belonged to no school and left no successor or imitator in the field he had chosen.

The Elite Theatre

Around 1925 was born what may be called the elite theatre. There were, of course, earlier anticipations like *Igappa Heggaḍe Vivāha Prahasana* (1887). It was the first independent Kannada play and was written in the *havyaka* dialect of North Canara. It was non-mythological, and it made use of stark realism and aimed at severe social criticism. It exposed the crass folly of a society which permitted a very old man to marry a very young girl, only because of his wealth.

The times were changing and with the spread of education, the middle class was coming into prominence. The impact of European dramatists like Shakespeare, Shaw and Ibsen on the one hand and the great masters of classical Greek Theatre like Aeschylus and Sophocles on the other was changing the attitudes and values of the newly educated class.

When B. M. Srikantaiah (Śrīkaṇṭaiyya, 1884–1946) ('Sri') wrote his *Gadāyuddha Nāṭaka* (The Drama of the Mace-fight) in 1925 and his second play, *Aśvathāman*, in 1929, he was setting a new trend and starting a new era in Kannada drama. He was practically the first person to introduce into Kannada theatre the western concept of tragedy. Possibly he was also the first Kannada dramatist who used drama as the vehicle of a personal vision of human life. His two plays were first staged by the students of Maharaja's College in Mysore and these pioneers formed the nucleus of the first amateur troupe ever in Karnataka.

The first play, *Gadāyudha Nāṭaka*, is based on a *campū kāvya* (*Sāhasa Bhīma Vijaya*) of poet Ranna (10th century). The play as it stands now owes some of its merits to this poem. The entire concept and the basic structure of the tragic drama came from Srikantaiah's deep study and understanding of western and Greek drama.

It is in the great play *Aśvathāman* that we see the nature, skill and vision of the dramatist. When the play was first produced in 1929 it raised a storm of admiration and condemnation, not only because Srikantaiah had let the Chiranjeevi of the Mahabharatha kill himself but because he had introduced western (Greek) ideas of tragedy, with its chorus, the three unities, the tragic flaw and the tragic hero.

Although Srikantaiah based his play on Sophocles' *Ajax*, he produced an almost original masterpiece. Sophocles' play is the story of the Greek hero's ignominous attempt to kill his fellow soldiers, his tragic downfall and final redemption. Srikantaiah found a peculiarly parallel story in the *Sauptika Parva* of the Mahabharata which enabled him to Indianize the Greek Tragedy. The result was that he produced a rich and enduring alloy in *Aśvathāman*.

At the end of the Mahabharatha War, Asvathaman is deeply moved by the sight of the dying Duryodhana on the battlefield. Realizing that Duryodhana had been defeated by Bhima by unfair means, Asvathaman takes a vengeful oath to kill the Pandavas and their families that night. On his way to the Pandava camp with this murderous design, the god Rudra stops him, but Asvathaman boastfully defies Rudra and brings upon himself the fury and curse of the god. Under Rudra's influence Asvathaman mistakes cattle for his enemies and slaughters the dumb animals. Rudra laughs derisively and sends Asvathaman to his doom. Krishna hears reports of Asvathaman's ghastly misdeeds and regrets the downfall of the once valiant hero. When the possessed Asvathaman comes to his senses after the harrowing slaughter in the cowshed, he feels shattered and kills himself. There is a bitter quarrel over his dead body on the question of the funeral rites. Finally, both friend and foe acknowledge Asvathaman's greatness.

Srikantaiah made several departures from Sophocles' play. Asvathaman's motives are much more natural and even understandably human. Srikantaiah creates great visual effects in the narrative scenes and even in long dialogues such as the one between Rudra and Krishna. Srikantaiah's

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Krishna is more human and more godlike in his dignity and demeanour than Sophocles' Athene. 'Srikantaiah has taken the greatness of Ajax and grafted it on the character of Asvathaman quite successfully; the hero rises to greater moral heights than the Ajax and the Asvathaman of Mahabharatha do' (cf. *B. M. Srikantaiah* by A. N. Moorthy Rao).

Metrically *Aśvathāman* is a magnificent triumph. Srikantaiah has used old Kannada diction, which suits his purpose admirably. The play has achieved an unusual lyrical grandeur, some of the songs being exquisite examples of Srikantaiah's lyrical power. What Samsa did with his historical material, Srikantaiah does with the Mahabharatha and Greek stories, probably with greater sensibility and conscious artistry.

With Srikantaiah began the *Navōdaya* (i.e. the modern age) in Kannada literature. Among the writers of this age, Masti Venkatesa Iyengar (Māsti Venkaṭēśa Ayyaṅgār, b. 1891) has attempted many forms including drama, although he is best known as a novelist and story writer. But the short play *Yaśōdhara* (1933) is a *tour de force*. The utter humanity of Yasodhara and the compassion of the Buddha are juxtaposed in the intensely lyrical situation of the Buddha's return to Kapilavasthu. Masti shows how a sad and frustrated wife is transformed into a woman of stoic wisdom. According to L. S. Seshagiri Rao, Yasodhara within the play moves from the prison of the past to the world of the timeless (*An Introduction to Modern Kannada Literature*, Kannada Sahitya Parishat, Bangalore, 1976, p. 24). *Māsati* (The Great Woman, 1953) is a grim tragedy built on a traditional tale of a woman who committed sati.

The merit of Masti's *Kākana Kōte* (The Fort of Kaka, 1938) as excellent drama and excellent theatre has only recently been recognized. Kaacha, the hero of the play, is the headman of a small tribe of shepherds. The ruler of Mysore is Ranadhira Kantirava. His deputy, the Heggade, harasses the shepherds. The play shows how the intelligent Kaacha (who at one stage calls himself Kāka) succeeds in bringing the king himself to the rescue of the tribe. Ranadhira orders that the tribal village be placed directly under the king. It is now called Kakana Kote.

It is a simple tale, told with lyrical felicity and spontaneous joy. Though it is a historical play, all the characters, except Ranadhira, are creations of Masti's imagination. There are few exciting moments and fewer surprises. But Masti succeeds in delving deep into the socio-economic life of the tribal folk, presenting some archetypal characters and situations. He uses language with remarkable subtlety and suggestiveness. The play shows the slow urbanization of the tribal folk, which, though sad, is inevitable. At the end, the villagers only exchange a bad tyrant for a benevolent one, a note of irony which the playwright perhaps never intended. The lyricism of the play casts a charm over the action and never lets the real problems of the exploited tribal folk, and their poverty, intrude.

Two Giants

The changing social conditions in the twenties, already referred to, made new values and outlook possible. The emergence of two giants, T. P. Kailasam (Kailāsam, 1884–1946) and Adya Rangacharya (Ādya Raṅgācārya; pseud.: Śrīraṅga, b. 1904) was fortunate. Both studied in England and were influenced by the serious and ironic comedies of Shaw and the tragedies of Ibsen. Kailasam wrote his first play *Ṭoḷḷu-Ghaṭṭi* (The Hollow and the Solid) in 1923. The production of the play was a historic event in Kannada theatre. The theatre-going public, which had till then been fed on the musical melodramas and mythological extravaganzas of the professional theatre, felt shocked and surprised. Here was a play with a theme lifted straight from their own everyday lives. The selfless, noble Madhu is contrasted against the self-centred mean Puttu, his brother. Puttu, the inveterate bookworm who achieves credits in all examinations, is the apple of his father's eye. But he is so callous and selfish that when a fire breaks out at home he flees the burning house and worries only about his books and not about his sickly and disabled mother. Madhu struggles frantically and rescues his people, risking his own safety. The play ends with a homily that what looks hollow and what passes for solid are not always what they seem.

Kailasam again and again returns to this theme of the difference between appearance and reality in his plays. In *Ammāvra Gaṇḍa* (The Madam's Husband, 1939), Saroja, the haughty society woman, and her henpecked husband are contrasted with Kamalu, the submissive wife, and her aggressive husband Narasimhaiah. The so-called weak woman proves to be stronger than the boastful aggressive woman. *Vaidyana Vyādhi* (The Physician's Malady, 1940) is another play by Kailasam that uses his favourite theme of parallels and contrasts. This short play opens with Subbanna's wife Parvathamma throwing a used leaf into the dustbin, while Subbanna washes his hand after dinner. Almost at the same time, Ranganna is seen throwing his used leaf into the dustbin. Subbanna jeers at his weak neighbour for his servility and sermonizes on mascuiline superiority. He advises Ranganna to suppress his wife and mother-in-law by threatening to return them to their home town. Ranganna puts down the women's revolt in his own home and becomes a new man, but is shocked when he finds Subbanna being scolded by his wife and mother-in-law for not having washed the vessels and collected the cowdung to clean the floor. Ranganna asks Subbanna why his fort of masculine superiority, impregnable only a few hours before, has collapsed suddenly. Subbanna confesses that his wife was only throwing away her own leaf into the dustbin and he was only washing his hand after he had cleaned

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the place where she had eaten.

The play moves smoothly and Subbanna, the loquacious pretender, dominates it until he is unmasked at the end. The play is full of surprises which do not offend our credulity. We are as much surprised by the end as Ranganna is.

Although Kailasam is profoundly influenced by Bernard Shaw, he is more tender than Shaw. His characters are more human than those of Shaw. Kailasam's plays often lack plot and incident and become mere vehicles of his satire deriding accepted values and beliefs. He has an inexhaustible fund of verbal energy which he uses to reveal his sense of character. He brought drama close to life. Earlier, drama seemed to be chiefly concerned with the doings of the gods and godlike men. The so-called 'Social Drama' was obsessed with preaching morality and sermonizing on the evils of drinking or child marriage. Those plays were, at best, entertaining melodramas. But Kailasam brought on the stage helpless widows, oppressed wives, henpecked husbands, vainglorious snobs, bookworms, truly wise boys, rascals and impostors who provided a curious mixture of amusement and gravity. But the peculiar language he forged is difficult to articulate and this, along with excessive punning, limits the appeal of his plays. Although Kailasam did write tragedies with serious social schemes, they have been less successful than his serious and ironic comedies. He also wrote several plays in English, such as *Purpose*, *Karna* and *The Burden*. Among his major works may be mentioned *Home Rule* (1930), *Sūḷe* (The Prostitute, 1945), *Sāttavana Santāpa* (The Dead Man's Agony, 1943), *Pōli Kiṭṭi* (Kitti, the Good-for-nothing, 1943) and *Baṇḍavāḷa Villada Baḍāyi* (Full of Sound and Fury, 1942).

The second major Kannada playwright to be influenced by Shaw and Ibsen was 'Sriranga'. He wrote his first play *Udara Vairāgya* (The Philosophy of Renunciation) in 1930. Initially Sriranga's concern was with the individual's predicament in a social milieu; however, his vision widened and his social concern became more positive as the years passed. Artistically *Harijanvāra* (Harijan Week, 1934) is the best of his early plays, though this play, influenced by the spirit of the Gandhian era of social and reformatory zeal, is his most controversial effort. Sriranga attempts to expose social humbug and hypocrisy. His main interest is to show the gulf between the precept and the practice of the so-called social and political leaders, like Dodda Rayaru (The Big Master). But the play is not just a bitter, satiric comedy. It is redeemed by the utter humanity of Venakka, the orthodox elder sister of the hero. She is, no doubt, intolerant of such new-fangled notions of her brother, as his concern for Harijan upliftment. But she is essentially human and saves a Harijan child from drowning in the gutter.

Sriranga's earlier preoccupation with individual man as a microcosm of society flags and in his later plays he takes up more general and even cosmic themes. His characters become more representative of humanity. Sometimes they do not have names but are just a Yuvati (a young lady) or a Samanyappa (an ordinary man), etc. *Kattle Beḷaku* (Darkness and Light, 1959) and *Kēḷu Janamējaya* (Listen, Janemejaya, 1960) augur a new trend in Sriranga's writings. In the former, a play with no story as such, Sriranga considers the basic problem of a creative artist. It is a play about a modern playwright who is frustrated, feeling that the professional theatre is not responding properly to the demands of real art. Since modern man, seeking to escape boredom longs for cheap sensation, and life itself is futile and meaningless, it is not possible to distinguish between light and darkness, black and white, good and evil—the traditional dichotomies of life. Therefore, the playwright finds that no drama is possible. In a sequence of three different situations, the playwright exhausts and rejects the possibilities of dramatic themes. And finally he comes to the conclusion that modern man is alienated from his own civilization. Sriranga implies that, in truth, the playwright himself is blind to the realities of life. When the playwright in Sriranga's play locks himself up in his house (in darkness), we see around his house the real drama of life taking place in the moonlight. Only he is blind to it because he has eyes, but sees not. Thus Sriranga creates a play within a play—the one encircling the other and illuminating the whole theme. He extends and enlarges this theme in *Kēḷu Janamējaya*. He presents a timeless battle between youth and old age, between experience and energy, through archetypal characters and situations.

Sriranga's mercurial mind functions at multiple levels and his recent plays encompass an infinite variety of themes. In *Dāri Yāvudayya Vaikuṇṭake* (Which is the Way to Paradise?, 1975) two ballistic missiles, one Russian, the other American, are the main characters. A wild man, a modern doctor, an ancient ruler and a politician are thrown into the fray. In the midst of the medley a playwright clashes with a theatre critic. Thus Sriranga lifts the transactions of the theatre to a cosmic level. His creativity is perennial and he is ever alive to new ideas and impulses.

Kailasam and Sriranga have left a deep impact on the theatre since their plays make great demands on the audience and require their participation in the action on the stage. Drama came to depend less on the plot than on the total experience provided by the production as a whole. Kailasam and Sriranga substituted for mythological heroes and their mythical sorrows, real men and women and their earthly trials and tribulations, with the emphasis on human relations.

Other Dramatists of the Age

Among other *Navōdaya* writers, K. V. Puttappa (Puṭṭappa

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b. 1904), writing as 'Kuvempu', P. Narasinga Rao (Narasiṅga Rāv, b. 1911) known as 'Parvata Vāṇi', and G. B. Joshi (Jōṣi, b. 1905) have written significant plays. Ku vempu's *Beraḷge Koraḷ* (The Neck for the Thumb, 1947) is the tragic story of Ekalavya. It is a powerful closet play with little theatrical possibilities in it. Parvata Vani's plays are eminently theatrical and he has helped to sustain the enthusiasm of the playgoer in the amateur theatre. G. B. Joshi is a dynamic playwright of the older generation and his *Mūkabali* (The Dumb Sacrifice, 1958) and *Kadadida Niru* (The Disturbed Waters, 1963) are of considerable merit. *Mūkabali* is the story of two warring families and depicts how innocent lives are sacrificed on the altar of family feuds. Through symbol and imagery the dramatist builds up a stifling atmosphere of tragic intensity. *Kadadida Niru* presents the domestic drama of a Gandhian worker, a poor peasant, whose idealism and essential nobility of character are crushed by the destructive powers of society. It is a profoundly moving play.

The New Wave Theatre

After the reorganization of the states in 1956, Bangalore, the capital of the new state, became the hub of cultural activities. The linguistic barrier between the different integrated areas disappeared and the theatre movement was galvanized. A number of troupes from abroad visited Bangalore, providing greater incentives to players and producers. Plays translated into Kannada from other Indian languages also attracted the play-goer. Thus the plays of Badal Sarkar in Bengali, of Vijay Tendulkar in Marathi, as well as those of Brecht and Pirandello appeared in translation on the Kannada stage. No wonder all this stimulated the imagination of young Kannada dramatists. As a consequence of contact with western theatrical modes, new trends, such as the Theatre of the Absurd and the Angry Young Men plays caught the fancy of the younger Kannada writers. Sumatindra Nadig's (b. 1935) *Bakkataleya Nartaki* (The Bald Dancer, staged in 1966), based on Ionesco's *The Bald Prima Donna*, was the first Theatre of the Absurd effort in Kannada. But these trends did not last long in Karnataka. However, a number of interesting theatre pieces were written by P. Lankesh, Chandra Shekhara Kambar, Chandra Shekhara Patil, N. Ratna, Chandrakant Kusanur and others. It cannot be denied that these attempts, halting and tentative as they were, did help to fertilize the soil for the growth of real art in the Kannada theatre.

When Girish Karnad (Giriś Kārnāḍ, b. 1938) wrote his first play, *Yayāti* (1961), critics hailed him as the morning star of modern Kannada theatre. While Karnad made free use of the Mahabharat a legend with all its elemental passions and conflicts, he made it the vehicle of a new vision—the conflict between the idealism and altruism of youth and the fear of death haunting the old. In his second play, *Tugalaq* (1964), Karnad combined great drama and good theatre. Although Karnad owes the idea of this play to Camus' *Caligula*, his play is more complex and richer in texture. The play reconstructs the story of Tugalaq—'the mad king' of Indian history—on an epic scale. Tugalaq, the Delhi Sultan, comes to the throne after murdering his father and brother. He proposes to shift the capital to Daulatabad in order to promote Hindu-Muslim integration. While he alone faces the dire consequences of his misdeeds, his good deeds and pious intentions are exploited by his followers for their own ends, and rogues like the washerman Azis thrive in the sunshine of royal patronage. The king moves from violence to violence until all his enemies are destroyed and his well-wishers leave him for good. The mad king then locks himself in the prison of violence which he himself has created. Karnad has succeeded in drawing the complex and paradoxical character of Tugalaq. He makes masterly use of imagery and symbol. The play stresses the duality of human nature by contrasting human idealism with human weakness which destroys it. This is magnificently embodied in the situation when the king is confronted by cartloads of counterfeit coins which he has to exchange for silver coins. Tugalaq kills his brother and his father at a prayer meeting and bans all prayers. But when he restores prayer, murderers come to kill him; he saves himself but not before he pollutes the prayer meeting again, with bloodshed and killing. Tugalaq learns the game of chess which teaches him how to manipulate human beings in the game of public affairs. But he himself becomes a pawn in the hands of the scoundrel Azis whose stars rise even as the sultan's sink. Karnad's next play *Hayavadana* (The Horse-Faced Man, 1971) uses the *Bayalāṭa* form. The play is based on Thomas Mann's retelling of the Bētaḷa Pañcavimśati story. It won the prestigious Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award, though it did not have the power and glory of *Tugalaq*.

Sankrānti (The Turning Point, 1973) by P. Lankesh (Laṅkēś, b. 1935) was an ambitious effort at writing a full-length play. He has attempted to delve into the social and political situations of the 12th century by re-creating an episode in the lives of Basavanna, the revolutionary reformer, and Bijjala, the Chalukya king. A Harijan youth, Rudra, a follower of Basavanna, falls in love with Usha, an orthodox Brahmin's daughter. The affair touches off a communal clash and Rudra is brought before Bijjala's court on a charge of having raped Usha. Usha betrays Rudra and Bijjala cannot prevent the law of the land from taking its own course. Lankesh has drawn some delightful vignettes in the play, including the characterization of Ujja, the Harijan leader. Lankesh also succeeds with his portrayal of the bacchanalian crowds, but fails to bring out the tragic predicament of the betrayed lover.

Jōkumāra Svāmi (1973) by Chandrasekhara Kambar (Candraśēkhara Kambār, b. 1938) is a memorable play. It

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won the Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya Award. Kambar is a specialist in folk literature and he used the *Bayalāṭa* form in his earlier play *Ṛṣyaśṛṅga*. But the play was rather opaque or too intensely lyrical. Kambar's *Jōkumāra Svāmi* uses the same theme differently. The framework of the play comprises the famous phallic legend of Jokumara Svami, a fertility god. Through this the playwright projects a kind of morality drama, of the conflict between Good and Evil. The childless impotent headman of the village, the Gauda, is a symbol of Evil which is sterile and meaningless. He is a coward who torments the village girls and kills and loots innocent folk. Basanya is the gallant hero, who stands for the irresponsible and dauntless courage of youth. He loves the frustrated wife of the impotent Gauda and she bears his child. The Gauda's men kill Basanya. Kambar's play is rich with racy dialogue and lilting music. Paradoxically, he has cast the grim tale in a joyous vein as if to assert his faith in the Brechtian idea of empathy. It is interesting that the Folk Theatre has continued to be a source of inspiration to younger writers like Karnad and Kambar.

Other Dramatic Forms

Kannada drama is not wanting in the rarer dramatic forms such as the opera and the radio play. P. T. Narasimhachar's *Gōkula Nirgamana* (The Departure from Gokula, 1945) and *Ahalye* (1941) are exquisite operatic creations. Shivaram Karanth's *Gīta Nāṭakagaḷu* (Musical Plays, 1951) contains some beautiful operettas like *Sōmiya Saubhāgya* (Somi's Good Fortune) and *Kisa Gautami*. Karanth has explored myth, legend and folklore to find the material for his operas. Masti and S. N. Sivasvami have written some successful plays for broadcasting.

The Drama of Tomorrow

It must be confessed that there is no Kannada theatre based on a continuity of tradition. But recent productions have shown great sophistication and excellence. Drama has now become a form of urban entertainment, but, unfortunately it has not become a part of the cultural activities of the people as a whole. Drama has been merely the achievement of individual playwrights and talented directors like B. V. Karanth, who have been inspired by the impulse to modernize and create alternative forms of theatrical entertainment. The tension among these new forces has lent an experimental character to Kannada drama. Its associations with western drama and the traditional folk theatre are now mostly halting and tentative. But they will surely grow more steady and positive. The results of such encounters will depend not only on individual talent but also on social and political developments within the country as a whole. The development of drama, not to speak of revolution in the theatre, can never take place in a social or political vacuum.

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Kashmiri

ALI MOHAMMAD LONE

Classical Tradition

The Hindu Rajas of Kashmir were great lovers and patrons of the arts and endeavoured to promote and popularize the performing arts among the ruling clans and the people alike. Kalhana's *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, the 12th-century Sanskrit *kāvya* dealing with the history of the kings of Kashmir, contains many vivid, though very scanty, references which reveal the existence of a regular theatre, both classical and folk, which attracted large audiences in fairs and

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festivals and other occasions of public and state festivities. The *raṅgaśāla* (theatre) seems to have been a place of sanctity and worship, and dancers, singers and actors held in great respect. In fact most of the performances were held either in the rajas' palaces or in temples and other places of worship. *Nṛtya*, *nāṭya* and *saṅgīta* were not only the loftiest sources of recreation and enjoyment for the people but also an inseparable part of their socio-economic life. Kalhana has paid a rich tribute to one Chandak (Candaka, a poet-playwright, who throve in the reign of Tunija), one of the early kings of Kashmir and compared him with the author of Mahabharata.

Some of the Kashmiri kings have themselves been poets, playwrights and instructors of dance and music. Shankaravarman (883–902) is one such king about whom P. N. K. Bamzai writes:

> It is not unlikely that king Shankaravarman, who was also known by the name of Yasovarman, composed some poems himself. A lost drama entitled 'Ramabhyudaiya' written by one Yasovarman, which is cited by Anandavardhana (9th century) in his *Dhvanyāloka*, probably belongs to him.

King Kalasha (1063–89) is credited with the introduction of *Upāṅga-gīta*, the operatic song and ballet of dancing girls. (Pandit R. S. [tr.], *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, VIII 606). Writes Kalhana:

> The taste of *Upāṅga-gīta* and appreciation of the ballet of dancing girls such as were *comme il faut* in other lands, were introduced in this country by this very king.

Earlier, Abhinavagupta (b. c. 950) had written his *Abhinava Bhārati* and *Nāṭyālocana* on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

This golden era of the Kashmir culture, however, suffered a setback when the Muslim rulers took over the reins of power in the 14th century. The new rulers were keen to ameliorate the plight of the people and, therefore, preferred crafts to fine arts. But some of the kings, particularly Zainul Abidin (1420–70) of the Shahmir dynasty, proved to be greater lovers and patrons of the fine arts. Zainul Abidin left no stone unturned to revive the past glory of Kashmiri arts and letters. During his long reign of fifty years, the performing arts, including drama, received state patronage and attained great heights. Recalling the stage technique in Zainul Abidin's time, the Sanskrit chronicler Srivara writes:

> The stage was like a garden where the lamps on it looked like rows of *campaka* flowers. In some places rows of lamps were reflected on the water and those who were at a distance doubted if the lights were really lamps, or the spirits of the former kings assembled to view the present sovereign. (Srivara, *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, pp. 133–34)

The Kashmiri poet Yodhabhatta (15th century) is recorded to have written a drama on the life of King Zainul Abidin, entitled *Za'ena-Prakāśa*. P. N. K. Bamzai, quoting Srivara, writes about this drama:

> And the people witnessed the drama on the stage effulgent with decorations and distinguished by the excellence of sense, gestures and feelings fourfaced god.
> (Bamzai, P. N. K., *A History of Kashmir*, pp. 525)

This is the first Kashmiri drama mention of which is made by the Sanskrit chroniclers of medieval Kashmir. But unfortunately this drama did not come down to us and there is no certainty about its style of writing and presentation. Some scholars like Amin Kamil (b. 1924) assert that *Bāṇāsurvadha* by Bhattavatara is written in the *Upaṅga-gīta* style and may have been performed in the court of Zainul Abidin.

Folk Tradition

Side by side with the traditional Sanskrit drama, folk-drama also was performed during this time. The folk-drama or the *Bānda Paethar* (the banda play), as it is known even today, flourished in medieval Kashmir. Srivara has given an interestingly accurate account of the professional players, the *bānds* 'skilled in acting and graceful like so many moons placed in a row. Jesters were like fun personified, with their hanging breasts and artificial beards, with the movements of their teeth and brows, and with their cries, mimicking the cries of animals' (Srivara, *Rājataraṅgiṇi*, p. 230).

This graphic description corresponds in its minutest detail, except in the case of hanging breasts, to the well-known *Maskhara*, the jester or clown of the present-day *Bānda Paethar*.

The *bānds* perform in villages and towns; an open space or a green patch of land serving as an open-air stage. As may be equally true of *Jātra*, *Nauṭaṅki*, *Bhavāī*, *Yakṣagāna* and other performances elsewhere in the country, *Bānd Paethar* enjoys great popularity among the masses and the professional performers attract large audiences. The repertoire of these *bānds* invariably consists of a dozen or so *Paethars* (folk-plays) including the more important *Watal Paethar* (The Sweepers' Play), *Bata Paethar* (The Kashmiri Brahman's Play), *Raza Paethar* (The Raja's Play), *Darza Paethar* (Play About the Dardic Rulers of Kashmir; the Dards of the North Kashmir who ruled in the 16th century were known as Chaks), *Gowsany Paethar* (The Ascetic's Play), *Bakarwal Paethar* (The Nomad's Play) and the well-known *Śikargah*, an interesting costume play in which, side by side with human beings, beasts like the ape and leopard appear in interesting situations. Walter R. Lawrence writes about the *Bānds*:

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The Bhagats portray village life in a most vivid manner. Their dresses and make-up are excellent, and they represent most faithfully the internal working of a village community. The plot is very much the same. The Raja rides by to redress injustice, and his Wazir seizes on the Patwari and the Lambarder and calls for the village accounts. The unfortunate villager who has brought his grievance to the Raja's notice, is at first very loud and noisy in his complaints, but as he sees the Wazir and the Patwari laying their heads together, he becomes silent and sits as one fascinated. The denouement is that the Wazir finds that the Patwari is innocent, and the complainant receives a severe flogging.

(*The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 256)

The Bhagats are now Muslims, although their ancestors were devotees of Hindu gods and goddesses. The onslaught of cinema, broadcasting and now the television, has adversely affected the importance of these folk performers and most of them have taken to cultivation as their main source of livelihood. Efforts, however, are being made to keep this wonderful folk art alive and the state Academy of Art, Culture and Languages is giving financial assistance and monthly stipends to some of these folk parties. Annual folk festivals are also sponsored by the Academy.

Emergence of Drama Proper

The history of the modern Kashmiri drama, however, does not cover more than the last two and a half decades. Prior to this, just a few (Kashmiri) *nāṭakas* influenced by the Parsee theatre, were written and staged in Srinagar. The most significant of these is Nand Lal Kaul's *Satuch'y Kahvat* (The Touchstone of Truth, published in 1929 in the Persian script). Based on the life and ordeals of the righteous mythological Harishchandra and his wife Taramati, the drama has some pathetic and almost grotesque situations capable of evoking popular response. Jagan Nath Saqi, the one-time veteran stage artiste, spoke about this drama with a sense of nostalgia. The drama, according to him, 'moved the stone-hearted to tears and the comic relief in between the tense situations evoked laughter from the serene ones among the audience' (from a radio interview in September 1972 with Jagan Nath Saqi, a well-known stage and radio artiste of Kashmir who was earlier connected with the professional theatre).

Commenting on *Satuch'y Kahavat* and the other plays of Nand Lal Kaul, J. L. Kaul writes:

> They were adaptations and translations from Hindustani plays; but they were, all of them, a stage success. Kashmiri prose is, for the first time used for dramatic dialogue and, often enough, successfully. The diction and the idiom is appropriate to the *dramatis personae* who make their point with effect.
>
> (*Studies in Kashmiri*, p. 99).

Social Application. With the introduction of talkies the theatre received a hard blow and some performing companies wound up. For a time it seemed as though drama were dead. But some young and enthusiastic theatre-lovers kept the tradition alive though on a very limited scale. Dramas on social evils like the dowry system, forsaken widows, woman's dependence on man and the ever persisting mythological subjects were written and produced with very small attendance in the halls. The role of Kashmir Sudhar Samiti, a voluntary social organization of the local Hindus, cannot be overlooked since it encouraged and patronized the actors who were otherwise contemptuously dubbed as *Rasa Kath* (the rasa-playing ruffians).

Theatre Movement. Independence in 1947 increased the innate desire of the lovers of art to assess and review Kashmiri culture. The formation of the Cultural Front—a forum of writers, singers, poets and painters—was of great historical significance as it took some concrete steps to start a broad-based theatre movement. The Front, mainly concerned with propagandistic motives, introduced for the first time, one-act-plays like *Dollar Saheb* and *Akh Bata Tre* (One by Three, 1949) and staged these pieces through the length and breadth of the Valley. This was the first instance of its kind when theatre went to the people with a mission and unlike the *bānds*, did not ask for doles in lieu of its performance. The Cultural Congress, an off-shoot of the Cultural Front, did yeoman service in introducing plays on themes pertaining to the times and adopting latest stage techniques in production. *Viz Chhe Sany* (The Moment is Ours, 1955) by A. M. Lone, a drama on the problem of floods, was performed in about fifteen villages on a mobile stage. Thousands of villagers flocked to witness this drama in which the latest technique of make-up and lighting was adopted.

Opera

The credit of staging the first ever opera in Kashmiri written by the poet D. N. Nadim (b. 1916) also goes to the Cultural Congress. The opera, known as *Bombur Yamberzal* (The Bumble-bee and the Narcissus) was staged first in 1955 and then again, in 1955, at Srinagar. The story is based on a folk legend pertaining to the love of the Bumble-bee for the Narcissus. Supported by flowers like the red tulip, daisy and daffodil, the lovers ultimately meet and foil the intrigues of the enemies of the flower garden, the swift-winged storm and the yellow-faced Autumn. Nadim followed this opera by others like *Nīki Ta Badi* (Good and Evil, 1956), *Hemal Nagyray* (Hemal and Nagraj, 1956), *Śihily Kul* (The Shahi Tree, 1965) and *Veth* (Vitasta, 1976). The story of Veth

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revolves round the fulfilment of a dream of the goddess Vitasta to have union with the god Mahapadma-saras, the Wular Lake. The journey of love from the Nilanaga to the Mahapadma-saras is accompanied by the revengeful attitude of an *asura* (Basmagol) and the helping hand of Kamadeva. The opera (with its beautiful music, gorgeous costumes and a band of young and talented artistes) is perhaps the most outstanding recent development in Kashmiri. Other operas which deserve mention are Amin Kamil's (b. 1924) *Rava Rupi* and *Lolar Ta Bombar* (Lolar and Bombar, 1956), Muzaffar Azim's (b. 1932) *Sany Kisur* (golden-haired damsel of the folk-tale) and Rehman Rahi's (b. 1924) adaptation of Maxim Gorky's poem 'Death and the Virgin' entitled *Lol Yeli Motas Phor* (When Love Outwitted Death, 1961). All these operas were broadcast from Radio Kashmir and were very popular.

Festival Plays

The celebration of the Kashmir Festival which started in the mid-fifties as an annual feature sponsored by the Jammu and Kashmir Government resulted in a mushroom growth of drama clubs, and also marked the beginnings of the modern period of Kashmiri drama. Most of the plays written and produced during these festivals are long forgotten now because none of these attained the distinction of a standard play. In August 1958 the creation of an Academy of Art, Culture and Languages helped a lot in sustaining the movement and fostering a congenial atmosphere for the development of a theatre movement. The Academy sponsored annual drama competitions and festivals and also gave recognition and financial assistance to the performing clubs. It also arranged script competitions and gave scholarships for training in acting, direction, production and stage-craft in the National School of Drama, Delhi. Thanks to these festivals and other steps taken by the Academy in the field, some of the most significant plays, in respect of their thematic variety and technical experimentation, were written. It is a long list but special mention of the dramas which had some unique features in them may be made here:

1. *Nasti Mund Sawal* (A Point of Prestige) by Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din (b. 1928)
2. *Yahū* (O Thou) by R. K. Braroo (b. 1930)
3. *Talāś* (The Search) and *Budśah* by A. K. Rehbar (b. 1932)
4. *Taqdir* (Destiny) by Mohammad Subhan' Bhagat (b. 1928)
5. *Taqdir Saz* (The Makers of Destiny) by Ali Mohammad Lone (b. 1926)
6. *Insaf* (Justice), *Tshay* (The Shadow) and *Haram-Khanuk Ana* (Mirror in the Seraglio) by M. L. Kemmu (b. 1934)
7. *Akanandun* (The Darling Child) and *But Ta Bulldozer* (The Statue and the Bulldozer) by G. R. Santosh (b.1928)
8. *Hero Machama* by Pushkar Bhan (b. 1925)
9. *Rotul Ta Gunahgar* (Sinner and the Night) by Sajood Sailani (b. 1936)

Yahū is set against a rural background and some characters were taken from the traditional *Bānd* Theatre. The story is simple and deals with the ever present bureaucracy and its exploitation of the innocent villagers. The Raja is happy in his own home and does not bother about the misery of the people whom he has left to the mercy of his Karkuns, the employees. A young and bold village damsel, threatened with separation from her lover, summons up courage and knocks at the door of the raja's palace. She unveils her story and the raja becomes aware of the atrocities perpetrated by his Karkuns on the villagers and punishes them.

Talāś (The Search) is the story of a 'lost' man whose search for the self ends in death.

Budśah is woven round the life of King Zainul Abidin (1420–50) whose three sons constantly conspire against their father to usurp the covetted throne from him. The armed conflicts undertaken by the ungrateful sons embitter the life of the king and he dies a sad man.

Taqdir by Mohd. Subhan Bhagat is also set against a rural background wherein Khande a village exploiter hoodwinks a poor peasant and compels him to give his daughter in marriage to the crippled son of the former. The girl, however, cannot adjust to her husband and turns him out of her home. The matter is referred to the police. The police officer, investigating the matter, is himself bewitched by the girl and offers to marry her.

Taqdir Saz by Lone is a socio-political satire. Some of the most influential yet corrupt people, form a so-called Free Thinkers Forum and at its inaugural meeting invite the audience to express its free thinking. The members of the Forum, while speaking on the lofty ideals of life, are taken by surprise by the people, and their smallness, hypocrisy and corruption are exposed thoroughly. The politician, writer, social worker, a contractor, a civil servant and all the other members of the Forum are tried as in a people's court. The treatment received by the members, however, becomes intolerable and forgetting all their lofty ideals they join hands with each other and try to gag anyone who dares question them.

Akanandun by G. R. Santosh is based on the famous Kashmiri mythological character of the same name. Peace and prosperity prevail in the kingdom of the raja who rules his subjects with justice. He is himself gloomy and worried over the future of his crown as even after the birth of seven daughters the royal couple is not blessed with a male issue. Towards their middle age an ascetic blesses the couple and

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grants a boon on the condition that they return the child to the ascetic at the age of twelve. The child named Akanandun, becomes the darling of not only of his kith and kin but enjoys the love and respect of all his father's subjects. The royal couple forget the ascetic but on the appointed day he returns to claim the child. No amount of entreaties and tears move him and he kills the boy, cooks his flesh, eats it and then laughs like a demon. The raja and the rani are almost at the point of collapse when the ascetic calls the child. The child comes, alive and smiling.

Rotul ta Gunahgar by Sajood Sailani is written on two planes, the historical and contemporary. An old man with a large number of children is subjected to ill treatment, neglect and even hatred by his offspring. He is a retired teacher of history and is constantly reminded of Shah Jahan and the treatment he received at the hands of his sons, particularly Aurangzeb. The old man feeling utterly uncared for and unwanted, hates his existence and dies broken hearted.

The skilful use of lighting for dramatic achievement (*Yahū*), background music (*Akanandun*), audience participation (*Taqdīr Saz* and *Insaf*), caricatures and farcical situations (*Hero Machama*) and introduction of the Absurd (*Talāś* and *Haram Khanuk Ana*) were some of the main influences of the West. Even the influence of the Greek tragedies can be detected in historicals like *Tshay* and *Budśah* (dramas on the glorious and mighty Lalitaditya and Zainul Abidin) which show the poor souls dying almost inglorious deaths as if predestined by some supreme power.

Possibilities of dramatic achievement through application of indigenous folk styles were exploited to a major degree of success in plays like *Yahū* and *Insaf* (*bānd* style) and *Akanandun* (Dastan).

Western Influence

The presentation on stage of some western plays such as *The Lesson* by Eugene Ionescoe, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* by Samuel Becket helped create consciousness of the theatre of the Absurd among the local writers. Other plays in Indian languages written under the influence of the new wave of western theatre, augmented this consciousness to a great extent and plays like *Ādhe Adhūre* (The Incompleted Ones), *Pāñcvān Sawār* (The Fifth Rider), *Kāñcan Raṅg* (The Spell of Gold), *Evam Inderjīt* (Evam and Inderjeet), *Kisi Ek Phūl Ka Nām Lo* (Name any Flower), *Khāmoś Adālat Jāri Hai* (Silence, the Court is in Session), *Panchhi Aisē Ātē Hain* (The Birds Come Like This) and others helped a lot in creating an urge among the playwrights to grapple with modern man and his variegated physical and psychological problems. Symbolic presentation of themes, abstract sets and props, complicated yet meaningful use of lights, colours and costumes were so far unknown to the Kashmiri stage. Under the new influence however, a chair in the centre (*Yahū* and *Insaf*), a standing microphone (*Taqdir Saz*), an imaginary tree in the left corner of the stage (*Waiting for Godot*), spots of light (*Evam Inderjīt*), a mere sound effect (*Tshay*) or projection of light and shadows on the cyclorama (*Rotul Ta Gunahgar*) were enough to serve the purpose and achieve the desired effect. The theory of alienation propounded by some western playwrights was also exploited to a considerable degree of success in plays like *Adam Hawa Ta Iblīs* (Adam, Eve and Satan) by Ali Mohammad Lone (b. 1926) and *Nāṭuk Karew Bund* (Stop the Play) by Hari Krishen Kaul (b. 1934).

Traditional Continuity. Despite this new wave brought about by western influence, the dramas in the old style are still very much in demand. Most of the amateur clubs and the professional *bānds* of Akingom have no pretensions to the new wave and, yet, their plays are liked by people. The latter have a respectable repertoire of dramas which they perform round the year in different parts of the Valley. Most of their plays are based on the *Bānda-Paethar* style and this probably accounts for the popularity of the Bhagats in Kashmir.

Historical Plays

Not many historical plays have been written in Kashmiri. Jagan Nath Wali (b. 1917) wrote the semi-historical *Zin* dealing with the life and love of Habba Khatoon, the queen-poetess of Kashmir. The play was technically very weak and hence no club ventured to stage it. Amin Kamil also wrote a play on Habba Khatoon, which though staged did not last long on the performing line. *Suyya* by Ali Mohammad Lone deals with a golden chapter of Kashmir history, portraying the genius of a Chandala boy who carried out anti-flood operations to success in Avantivarman's reign in the 9th century (the Sahitya Akademi Award winner, 1972). Lone made use of the Sanskrit *sūtradhāra* and the Greek chorus in this drama and through these tried to cover up time and space without obstructing the main stream of the story. *Tshay* (The Shadow), by M. L. Kemmu is based on the last phase of the life of Lalitaditya (8th century), the great conqueror King of Kashmir. The King leads a campaign against his enemies in a mountainous region and perishes in snow along with his armies. *Budśah* by Autar Krishen Rehbar is yet another play dealing with the illustrious Zainul Abidin (15th century) and his sons. Budshah or the great King dies a sad and shattered man because of the actions of his overambitious and constantly intriguing sons.

Humorous Plays. *Hero Machama* (Sahitya Akademi Award winner, 1977), a serial play by Pushkar Bhan, stands out as a unique and unbeaten humorous play. The Hero

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his friends Sula and Rehman, wife Khatji and the parents belong to the lower middle class with very limited material resources, wanting wealth and fame at any cost, by deed or in dream. The hero plans, schemes and dreams but everything ends in failure. The inveterate dreamer, frustrated temporarily, does not give in and tries again. 'Though sometimes the situations created are burlesque and the fun hilarious, we find here a sustained plot and amusing incongruities of speech and action which provoke spontaneous laughter' (J. L. Kaul, *Studies in Kashmiri*, p. 262). Other plays written in a humorous vein are: *Grand Rehearsal* by Pushkar Bhan (b. 1924) and S. N. Sadhu (b. 1935), *Havas* (Desire) by Mohd. Subhan Bhagat, *Insaf* (Justice) and *Trunov* (The Thrice-named One) by M. L. Kemmu, *Phand Baz* (The Swindler) by Sajood Sailani, *Girdab* (The Whirlpool) by A. K.. Rehbar and *Narkapuri* (The Hell) by M. L. Sarraf (b. 1933).

Social Plays

There is always a spurt of social plays whenever there is a festival around. Yet, most of these plays fail to make any lasting impression, as cheap sentimentality borrowed from the Hindi films is a common feature. It is invariably a middle-class family with a submissive daughter-in-law, a cruel mother-in-law, an inactive father with his useless son and unmarried daughter. Bargaining on marriages and dowry form the backbone of most of these plays. But there are some social dramas like *Nav Noś* (The New Bride), *Lal Bo Drayas Lolare* (Lala in Search of Love), *Taqdīr* by Mohd. Subhan Bhagat, *Godān* (adapted from Premchand's Hindi classic by Bhushan Betab), *Ba Chhus Tsūr* (I Am the Thief) by A. K. Rehbar and *Rotul Ta Gunahgar* by Sajood Sailani which stand out as good dramas and are repeatedly staged.

Political Plays

Strictly speaking no political play as such has so far been written in this language. However, elements of political satire are found in the plays *Nāṭuk Kariv Band* (Stop the Play) by H. K. Kaul, *Taqdīr Saz* by Ali Mohammad Lone, *Kany Shechh* (Whisper-Mongering) by Mohammad Subhan Bhagat and the one-act *Manzuly Nika* (The Cradle Pigmy) by M. L. Kemmu. Even these plays, which do not touch politics or political figures directly are frowned upon by the politicians and their hangers-on, and therefore most playwrights are inhibited in this area of writing.

One-Act Plays

Scores of one-act plays have been written, and most of these are presented as skits, a common misnomer for the one-act plays. The outstanding among these are *Dollar Saheb* and *Akh Bata Tre* (authorship not known, probably edited by Roshan,) produced by the Cultural Front, *Ya Tan Ya Tarakh* (Attention or a Slap; a nonsensical cry denoting threat, anger, frustration or despiar) by Pushkar Bhan, *Tazy Batun Kan* (Tazi But's Arrow), *Adam, Hava Ta Iblīs*, by Lone, *College Paethar* (A College Play) by Farooq Masoodi (b. 1948), *Manzuly Nika* by Kemmu and *Gāṣī Taruk* (The Morning Star) by Sajood Sailani.

Radio Plays. Radio plays have played an important role in the development of theatre in Kashmir. The producers of stage plays sometimes resort to radio technique using recorded background music, sound effects and flashbacks. Many successful radio plays have been adapted for the stage. It is not possible to enumerate all the successful radio plays here but mention may be made of some playwrights who have contributed substantially towards the development of this genre. They are Pushkar Bhan, Bansi Nirdosh, S. N. Zutshi, S. N. Sadhu, Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, Sajood Sailani, Sufi Ghulam Mohd. (b. 1928), Shabnam Qayoom (b. 1938), Hari Kishan Kaul and Farooq Masudi. Lone himself has written scores of plays for the radio. Many Kashmiri radio plays have gone down in the National programme of plays and also bagged trophies in the Annual Play Production Competition of AIR. The Radio Kashmir's serial *Veth Rūz Pakan* (Vitasta Flows On) was a landmark in the history of Kashmiri radio plays.

Translations

Some well-known dramas from other languages have been translated. They are Chekov's *Three Sisters*, *The Bear* (tr. R. L. Shant, b. 1930); Gogol's *Inspector-General* (tr. S. N. Zutshi); Tagore's *Raja and Rani*, *The Post Office*, *Red Oleanders*, *Chandalika* and *Muktadhara* (tr. Amin Kamil, Noor Mohammed Roshan [b. 1920] and Lone respectively); Ibsen's *The Ghosts* (tr. Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din), *Wild Duck* (tr. S. N. Zutshi), *Would Be Gentleman* and Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* (tr. G. N. Firaq, b. 1923). These have considerably added to an otherwise very limited drama literature in the language.

Role of Theatre. The role of the theatre in fostering dramatic literature cannot be ignored. The theatre has created a consciousness among serious readers of the language who also seek anthologies and collections of plays. But unfortunately most of the plays written for the stage have not been published so far by their authors with the result that the number of translated plays published in Kashmiri is more than the number of original plays available in print. However special mention may be made of an anthology of seven short plays brought out by the State Academy as a special Drama Number of its journal *Śīraza* under the editorship of Amin Kamil.

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Malayalam

K. RAGHAVAN PILLAI

The First Period (1882–1940)

Malayalam drama has completed a hundred years in 1982. The first drama proper was Kerala Varma's (Kēraḷa Varma, 1845–1914) translation of *Śākuntaḷa* of Kalidasa. It was first published in 1882 (earlier in the year a prose translation of *Śākuntaḷa* was prepared by Āyilyam Tirunāḷ, the then ruling king of Travancore, and was published in the same year) and revised and republished in 1910. The translation of the best play of the prince among Sanskrit dramatists by Kerala Varma—senior prince consort of the royal family and himself a great scholar—soon became very popular. A drama company staged it widely.

While the drama thus appeared in 1882, there was already in Kerala a tradition of visual arts which had the elements of the drama in it. There was *Kathakaḷi* with its music, dance and stylized gestures; *Tuḷḷal*, a solo act with the same ingredients; *Kūttu*, exposition of texts given by the *cākyārs*; *Kūṭiyāṭṭam* in which the *cākyār* was accompanied on the stage by an actress and a comedian. Then there was a tradition of temple rituals which too presented visual arts. There was *Teyyam* in which Kāḷi killed the demon Dāruka in a vigorous drama. There were also other similar ritual arts. In a popular and secular tradition there was such a play as *Kākkāriśśināṭakam* (The Play of the Kakkars) presented by an itinerant community called Kākkārs. This constituted an old folk tradition in the drama. It was a regular play with its own kind of heroes, heroines, villains and comedians. The Tampurān or a member of the higher class tries to tempt the wife of the Kākkān, member of a lower class itinerant community. The woman is offered bright cloth. In fact the Kākkān is accompanied by two wives. The easy and bantering tone with which the landlord speaks to the lower class man and his wives reminds one of the old feudal freedom. The play also incorporates into itself episodes from the Ramayana and other epics. Thus Rama's exile and Sita's accompanying him into the forest are adapted in a vulgarized form to make it suit the situation in which the Kākkān and his wife find themselves. Mention is made here of this folk theatre in some detail because there is almost a revival of this in a contemporary theatre movement designated *tanatunāṭakavēdi* or an indigenous theatre which is discussed briefly towards the close of this article. A Christian play form called *caviṭṭunāṭakam* (the ballet play) in which there was a lot of footwork, also prevailed for some time. The theme was Christian, but the form reminded one strongly of *kathakaḷi* and *tuḷḷal*. As in *kathakaḷi* the story and the dialogue were in verse; but unlike in that art form, where musicians sing these, and the dancers render them in footsteps, gestures and face-signs, here the actors do the singing too as in *tuḷḷal*. *Caviṭṭunāṭakam*, however, did not survive.

The religious and popular art forms mentioned above with elements of drama in them were artistically satisfying to an audience who were prepared for the drama when it finally arrived. These art forms also performed the useful function of social criticism, often through a comedian.

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This brief survey of the background of the drama proper in Malayalam should show that the Kerala society was not entirely deprived of the benefits of the stage arts before the drama proper appeared in 1882. There was a developed world of the visual arts, religious and secular, folk and tribal satisfying the needs of society in entertainment and instruction.

Kerala Varma's translation of *Śākuntaḷa* was followed by a large number of translations of Sanskrit plays. Stalwarts of the period, such as Kodungalloor Kunjukkuttan Thampuran (Koduṅgallūr Kuññukkuṭṭan Tampurān, 1864–1913), A. R. Rajaraja Varma (Rājarāja Varma, 1863–1918), Pandalam Kerala Varma (Pantaḷam Kēraḷa Varma, 1879–1919), N. Kumaran Asan (Kumāran Āśān, 1873–1924) and Vallathol Narayana Menon (Vaḷḷattōḷ Nārāyaṇa Mēnōn, 1878–1958) translated Sanskrit plays. Adaptations and independent plays, in the Sanskrit forms, were also written. The first independent play was *Kalyāṇī Nāṭakam* by Kodungallur Kochunni Thampuran. Playwriting and translation eventually became a deluge. Then, in 1894, a wit named Munshi Rama Kurup (Munṣi Rāma Kurup, 1848–98) produced a satire with the title *Cakkīcaṅkaram* (About Chakki, the Servant maid, and Chankaran, the Servant, 1894) to poke fun at the poetasters who wanted to earn easy poetic glory by translating Sanskrit plays, adapting them and so on. (A year later another writer K. C. Narayanan Nambiar wrote another play with the same title with the same purpose.) The title itself, one can see, is a parody of such titles as *Mālatimādhavam*. In this play Kumbhāṇḍa, an attendant of Siva threatens a large number of playwrights who gather at the wedding of a magistrate's son with petitions to be allowed to stage their plays. Kumbhāṇḍa says threateningly:

Come here, you writers of atrocious plays,
You have become a burden to the earth,
You will improve only if you are thrashed. (tr.)

This period was notable not merely for translations from Sanskrit alone. Shakespeare was rendered into Malayalam by more than one writer. *The Taming of the Shrew* became *Kalahintdamanakam* (1894) from the pen of the influential editor Kandathil Varughese Mappila (Kaṇḍattil Vaṟugīs Māppiḷa, 1858–1904). The title is a literal translation of the original title, but the content is an adaptation. *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *The Merchant of Venice* were translated by A. Govinda Pilla (Gōvinda Piḷḷai, b. 1924). He also translated Sophocles' *Oedipus*, thus becoming the forerunner of K. M. Panikkar (1894–1963, *Oedipus*, 1957), S. K. Nayar (*Prometheus*, 1957), C. J. Thomas (*Antigone*, 1955) and others in later years. In fact, translations of plays from other languages, Indian and European, have never really ceased to appear in Malayalam. Ibsen's *Ghosts* has been translated by A. K. Gopala Pillai (Gōpāla Piḷḷa) and A. Balakrishna Pillai (Bālakṛṣṇa Piḷḷa, 1889–1960), in 1936. Since then K. Ramachandran Nayar (Rāmacandran Nāyar, b. 1930), E. M. Kovoor (Kōvūr, b. 1906) and others have translated Ibsen. There are more than 30 translations of *Śākuntaḷa* and about 34 translations of Bhasa's plays. Shakespeare's plays have about as many translations. New translations of the works of Kalidasa and Shakespeare have appeared even in the 1970s. More than 40 translations of the prolific Bengali playwright Dwijendra Lal Roy appeared between 1919 and 1950. And Tagore, of course, was a must.

A Musical Interlude

From the Sanskrit prose-verse pattern of the play it was not a long way to the musical. And the Tamil musicals, which were popular, provided the immediate incentive. The first play in this line was *Saṅgītanaiṣadham* (1892) by T. C. Achyuta Menon. Eruvayil Chakrapani Varrier's *Hariścandracaritam* (1898) also needs mention here. An excellent and popular musical *Sadārāma* was written by K. C. Kesava Pillai (Kēśava Piḷḷa, 1868–1913) in 1903. But the musical as a genre did not flourish. However, a work like the *Maṛiāmma Nāṭakam* (A Play on Mariamma, 3rd ed., 1926) by Kocheeppan Tarakan (Koccīppan Tarakan, 1861–1940) deserves mention. It had as its theme the dowry system prevalent among the Christians of Kerala and the resultant daughter-in-law–mother-in-law strife. K. C. Kesava Pillai's play *Lakṣmīkalyāṇam* (1908) in the prose-verse Sanskrit pattern had for its theme the social evils of the Nair community. The same writer also wrote another musical *Rāghavamādhavam* (1893), though it did not achieve the popularity of his *Sadārāma*. Some years later the musical enjoyed a brief glory again when literary works like *Karuṇa* (1924) by N. Kumaran Asan, were presented as musicals by Ochira Velukutty and others. During this period too plays in which Sanskrit and Tamil features were seen, were written in North Kerala. Prominent among these playwrights was the poet Kuṭṭamattu, author of *Bālagōpālan*. But the days of the musical were numbered. The prose-drama was around the corner.

The Second Period—The Prose-Play

The emergence of the prose-play was inevitable. Malayalam had come into contact with the prose literatures of western languages, chiefly English, in the 20th century. The first prose-plays were stage versions of the historical novels of C. V. Raman Pillai (Rāman Piḷḷa, 1858–1922) and the social novels of O. Chandu Menon (Cantu Mēnōn, 1847–1900). The first printed plays, however, were farces. They were from the pen of C. V. Raman Pillai himself. As the author of monumental historical novels, *Mārttāṇḍa Varma*, *Dharmarājā*, *Rāmarājabahadūr*, on the history of

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the state of Travancore, C. V. was a prominent figure in Malayalam literature. C. V.'s first farce was *Kuruppillākkaḷari* (A School without a Master, 1909). In it he laughs at the affected westernization of the society around him. A number of other farces followed. In *Paṇḍatte Pāccan* (Good Old Pachan, 1935), a servant's adventures in a successful embassy of love on behalf of his master is related hilariously. We find here the sudden sprouting of love in the heart of a doctor who was a chronic bachelor. In that situation the adventures of his funny and resourceful Man-Friday Pachan takes over in attempts to fulfil the doctor's desire. Pachan has his own love-life with a woman of his class and we have an interesting intermingling of the courses of the two loves. After several unexpected adventures and disguises Pachan, like the servant Sganarelle in Moliere's *Flying Colours* arranges the fulfilment of his master's love.

C.V .'s farces are still lively pieces to read. The element of the unexpected makes them dramatic. They were successfully staged during the playwright's time itself. While there seems to be a world of difference between the highly Sanskritized vocabulary of C. V.'s novels and the language of his farces, the witty dialogue in colloquial Malayalam with which the novels abound really anticipated the farces. He wrote several well-known plays.

C. V. Raman Pillai's son-in-law E. V. Krishna Pillai (Kṛṣṇa Piḷḷa, 1894–1938) was a lawyer and politician. He was also one of the two most significant humorists of the age, the other being a professor of English, M. R. Nair from North Malabar who wrote essays and poems under the pen-name Sañjayan. E. V. wrote a number of farces. *B. A. Māyāvi* (A Graduate Jekyll and Hyde, 1934), *Praṇayakkammīṣan* (A Commission on Love, 1932), *Peṇṇaraśunādu* (The Land of the Amazons, 1935) were some of his farces. Towards the end of his short life, E. V. appeared to have become problem- conscious in his farces. Thus his *Vivāhakkammaṭṭam* (The Marriage Mint, 1935) tells the story of a high official hunting for a son-in-law for his none-too-pretty nor brilliant daughter. He arranges a job for a would-be son-in-law. But a crafty and charming impersonator comes along and takes both 'job and girl'. The sad early death in 1938 of this very talented playwright, essayist and short-story writer, amidst the political struggle in the Travancore state, deprived Malayalam drama of a man of genius. But the show went on. N. P. Chellappan Nair (Cellappan Nāyar, 1903–72), a junior contemporary of E. V. Krishna Pillai, wrote a number of plays in this genre. He employed a rather low brow type of language and extreme exaggeration in his plays. His plays, like *Vikaṭayōgi* (The Crook of a Yogi, 1939), *Lt. Nāṇi* 1945) and *N. G. O.* (1967) were staged widely. In later years, he too became problem-conscious. We thus have *Ibilīsukaḷuṭe Nāṭṭil* (In the Land of the Devils, 1960) in which he laughs at political parties and extols the virtues of honest work. M. G. Kesava Pillai, K. G. Sethunath (Sētunāth, b. 1924), Anandakkuttan (Ānandakkuṭṭan, b. 1920), T. N. Gopinathan Nair (Gōpināthan Nāyar, b. 1918) and K. S. Krishnan (Kṛṣṇan, b. 1925) are some of the other names to be remembered in the writing of farces.

The Serious Comedy

But in time even the inveterate raisers of laughter, like E. V. and N. P., moved away from mere farce. As A. Nicoll says, farce gave way to comedy with serious purpose, the Comedy of Manners, 'to that kind of high comedy where occasionally the very ripple of laughter dies away, where a chastened mood brings serious reflection' (Allardyce Nicoll, *World Drama*, London, p. 840). M. G. Kesava Pillai, himself a contemporary of E. V. Krishna Pillai, wrote several plays of this type, largely depending on Moliere. Kainikkara Kumara Pillai (Kainikkara Kumāra Piḷḷa, b. 1900) wrote the plays *Vēṣaṅṅaḷ* (Pretensions, 1946) and *Mātṛukāmanuṣyan* (The Ideal Man, 1962), both excellent comedies of manners. In this latter comedy a man who makes a fetish of his principles and makes everyone miserable is chastened and brought back to reason by his sister-in-law, who has returned from America.

Historical, Social and Political Plays. In the early decades of the 20th century there was social and political unrest. The nation started to look back at its history, and into the still earlier past of the puranas, to discover its identity. Consequently, several historical and puranic plays, as well as social and political plays were written. Mention has been made earlier that the first historical plays to be staged were based on C. V. Raman Pillai's historical novels. Following this, that versatile man of letters E. V. Krishna Pillai wrote his *Sītālakṣmi* (1930), about a heroine of that name who belonged to an aristocratic Nair family, one of a group of eight families exterminated by King Marthanda Varma of Travancore. Krishna Pillai was uncommonly bold, in the context of the loyalty to ruling princes then prevalent, to make his heroine question the sanity and sanctity of the type of absolute power which kings wielded. A decade later he boldly put his beliefs into practice in his politics. He also wrote another historical play, *Iravikuṭṭippiḷḷai* (1933), about a soldier hero in Travancore folklore. Inevitably, in this period, the historical heroes who were made the subject of the plays, were those who had figured in the struggle against the British. Thus Vēlu Tampi of Travancore, who fought against the British and committed suicide rather than surrender, and Pazhaśśi Rāja of North Kerala, who also fought against the British, were honoured with plays written about them by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai (Kainikkara Padmanābha Piḷḷa, 1898–1976) and Kappana Krishna Menon (Kappana Kṛṣṇa Mēnōn, 1896–1981) respectively, in 1933 and 1935. The plays bear the names of these heroes as their titles. V. Nilakan

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Pillai, S. K. Nayar (b. 1917), Brahmavritan (Brahmavrutan, 1908–81) and Tikkotiyan (Tikkoṭīyan, real name P. Kuññanantan Nāyar, b. 1916) are among others who paid homage to the past in this fashion.

It was natural that playwrights looking backward would use the puranic age. Several plays were written during this period re-creating the puranic stories and personalities, either in a straightforward manner or in an interpretative form. Murkoth Kumaran's (Mūrkōt Kumāran, 1871–1941) *Kūniyuṭe Kusṛti* (The Mischief of the Hunchback; 1920), K. M. Panikkar's *Maṇḍōdari* (2nd ed., 1941), V. Krishnan Tampi's *Dhruvacaritam* (The Story of Dhruva, 1936), Kainikkara Kumara Pillai's *Mōhavum Muktiyum* (Desire and Release, 1938) are important examples. Nor was this an expression of a Hindu revival. Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai wrote the play *Kālvariyile Kalpapādapam* (The Tree of Life of Calvary, 1932) on the Christ theme. We will see that a few playwrights in the fifties and sixties re-created the puranic myths in still more subtle forms and experimental moulds.

Plays on Social Unrest

Looking back at history was only part of an overall search for identity in which the Indians of this period were involved. And the playwright was no exception. But while re-creating the heroes of the past not all the social mores of the past went unquestioned. Awareness of the doctrines of social justice prevalent in the West was the spur for plays on the misery of the women of the Nambudiri community, who were confined to the inner apartments of their homes, lacked education and had to put up with the polygamy of their menfolk. V. T. Bhattatirippad (Bhaṭṭatirippād, b. 1896), wrote his play *Aṭukkaḷayil Ninnu Araṅṅattēkku* (From the Kitchen to the Forum) in 1930. The play was an instant success. Other plays on the same theme followed. M. P. Bhattatirippad's *Ṛutumati* (The Girl Coming of Age) and his brother M. R. Bhattatirippad's *Maṛakkuṭayile Mahānarakam* (The Hell Behind the Umbrella, 1931) should be mentioned. *Itu Bhūmiyāṇu* (This is the Earth) by K. T. Mohammed, in 1955, turns the searchlight on Muslim society. Earlier, Edasseri Govindan Nair (Edaśśēri Gōviṇḍan Nāyar, 1906–74) wrote his very successful play, *Kūṭṭuvāyi* (Joint Farming, 1950) on the theme of fragmentation of the land and the need to adopt joint farming methods. In *Naṣṭakkaccavaṭam* (Bad Barter, 1957), C. N. Srikanthan Nair (Śṛīkaṇṭhan Nāyar, 1928–77) brings out another aspect of the woe that befalls women under social constraints. The dramatist holds the Nair community up for scrutiny and throws light on a situation which develops around a mutual marriage, i.e. a man marrying a woman to whose brother he gives his sister in marriage. Sometimes a mere method of conserving the wealth and property of two families, it is also a system which can make either one of the women or both hostages in rapacious families. Srikanthan Nair draws in a context of this kind the picture of a strong woman who refuses to be rejected according to the fancy of her husband who is pulled by the inevitable pressures of a mutual marriage. In a play *Itu Nammuṭe Nāṭāṇu*, Omchery Narayana Pilla highlights the reluctance of the Indian middle class to work, with its caste-generated inhibitions. He calls for a healthy approach to work for the sake of national reconstruction.

The Political Play

Beginning as it did, in the thirties, the Indian political movement was a special impetus in the writing of political plays. There was also a strong Communist movement in Kerala and the play was undoubtedly a valuable medium.

The first political play was written in 1938 by a Communist intellectual, K. Damodaran (Dāmōdaran, 1912–1976). His *Pāṭṭabākki* (Arrears in Rental, 1938) highlighted the sad plight of the tenant at the mercy of the landlord. We find in this play the sad tale of a peasant family headed by a widow whose payment of rental to the landlord is in arrears. The family goes through untold misery. The woman's son who is a worker goes to jail for stealing some rice to feed the starving family. The old mother dies and the family becomes totally helpless. When the young man comes back from jail, to his rage he discovers that his grown-up sister has become a prostitute. When he understands the situation he takes a decision to work for his class. Two other Communists who have excelled in writing political plays are Ponkunnam Varki (Ponkunnam Varki, b. 1908) and Thoppil Bhasi (Tōppil Bhāsi, b. 1914). Varki, schoolmaster and later chairman of the Kerala Sahitya Akademi, wrote *Jētākkaḷ* (The Victors, 1946), *Vaḷi Tuṛannu* (A Path is Opened, 1956), *Viśaṛikku Kāṯṯu Vēṇṭā* (The Fan Needs no Breeze, 1958) among others. In all these plays the theme is uniform while the plots and characters change. The lusty landlord or capitalist and the strong, resisting peasant or worker are both constants. We also find the attempt of the lusty landlord or capitalist to seduce the worker's sister or wife and there is the inevitable organization of the working class. One, however, notes that Varki, a yoga-performing one-time teacher does not end his plays in bloodshed. More often there is the enlightenment and conversion of the capitalist. Among Bhasi's plays are *Mūladhanam* (Capital, 1958) and *Sarvēkkallu* (The Survey Stone, 1958); but his most forthright play is *Niṅṅaḷ Enne Kamyūṇistākki* (You Made Me a Communist, 1952). The title is derived from the declaration of an old man who became a Communist after starting out as an outspoken anti-Communist. Bhasi's plays had the benefit of being staged extensively by the Kerala People's Arts Club (KPAC). They have thus achieved considerable popularity. The late Cherukad (Cerukād; C. Gōvinda Piṣāraṭi, 1914–78), a schoolmaster and Com-

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munist, wrote a number of popular political plays with Leftist doctrine as their theme. P. J. Antony wrote such plays as *Potuśatrukkaḷ* (Common Enemies, 1961), etc. Another political play that should be mentioned is *Samatvavādi* (The Socialist, in *Puḷimānayuṭe Kṛitikaḷ*, 1961) by Pulimana Parameswaran Pillai (Puḷimāna Paramēśwaran Piḷḷa, 1893–1949). It is a play written in expressionist style. P. Kesava Dev (1904–83), novelist and a former Kerala Sahitya Akademi Chairman, first wrote affirmative Communist plays and later plays of disillusionment, like *Ñān Ippōḷ Kamyūṇistākum* (Beware, I will Become a Communist, 1953), an obvious parody on Bhasi's title. Vaikkam Chandrasekharan Nair (Vaikkam Candraśēkharan Nāyar, b. 1920) and S. L. Puram Sadanandan (Sadānandan, b. 1927) are among others who have written political plays.

The Modern Period

The New Play. We have seen that several types of thematically different plays were written at various stages of development of the drama in the period before 1940. The drama enters a new stage from that period. It was at this point that N. Krishna Pillai (Kṛṣṇa Piḷḷa, b. 1916) Professor of Malayalam, wrote *Bhagnabhavanam* (The Shattered Home, 1942), influenced by Ibsen's realism. The play was at once talked about and became the starting point of the new theatre. Of course, the serious play was already in the field in the form of the historical, social and political plays. But the new play had a very different structure. While the play till then was externally oriented, the new play concerned itself with the mind and emotions. The new play exercised a severe economy in characters. It was taut and proceeded towards the denouement with directness and speed. Its dialogue was probing and revealed inner conflicts and unmasked appearances. It was single tier in structure.

Bhagnabhavanam tells the story of a family, a father and three daughters, being shattered for no fault of theirs. The eldest daughter married to a very sick man, goes mad when torn by the conflict between her sense of duty to her husband and her affection for her cousin, who has returned from abroad and asked her to marry him. She decides to leave her husband, but just then her younger sister who is married to a rustic but living apart from him, in her father's home, commits suicide when her husband insists that she should return to him and insinuates that there is an unhealthy relationship between father and daughter. The sick husband of the eldest girl reveals his deep, ugly self when, on his death-bed, he tries to make his wife's lover promise that he will marry the youngest girl for the sake of the family.

Krishna Pillai revealed other such hidden selves in his characters in the plays which followed. *Kanyakā* (The Spinster, 1944), *Balābalam* (Strength and Weakness, 1946), *Anurañjanam* (Reconciliation, 1950) were all powerful plays, written in the Ibsenist realistic technique. Broadly speaking, Krishna Pillai's plays fall into two groups as far as the resolution of dramatic conflict is concerned: (1) those in which conflict leads to separation, as in *Bhagnabhavanam*, *Kanyakā*, *Balabālam*, and (2) those in which conflict is resolved by reconciliation, as in *Anurañjanam* and *Maruppacca* (Mirage, 1972). In *Anurañjanam* for example, the taut construction, the fast pace and the opposition of characters are there. But the play finally ends in a reconciliation between wife and husband who were embittered towards each other before. He has also other plays to his credit, including an expressionist one, *Darśanam* (Vision, 1949), which has the integrity of the artist as its theme.

The Newer Experimental Play. While Ibsen's selective realism had had its strongest exponent in N. Krishna Pillai and the taut structure of his realist play cast its influence on the Malayalam play thereafter, the general tendency of later playwrights was to move away from realism and adopt other experimental techniques. The result, however, is not that realism has been elbowed out but that it coexists with that experimental theatre. In the period after N. Krishna Pillai's plays, modern European theatre has influenced Malayalam drama considerably. A very talented dramatist C. J. Thomas (1918–60), who died in his early forties, has left some plays of enduring value. Thomas has highlighted the metaphysical problems of guilt, punishment and forgiveness in his plays *Avan Vīṇṭum Varunnu* (He is Coming Again, 1940) and *Ā Manuṣyan Nī Tanne* (You Are That Man, 1955). In the former, the soldier who returns home blind from the war forgives his wife, who is pregnant by his friend. He forgives his friend too. In the latter play, the Biblical King David pays for his sin of loving the beautiful wife of his soldier Uriah and getting him killed. David has to kill his own son, who attacks the king's city. Complex metaphysical problems and the several levels of meaning in Thomas' plays leave an enduring impression. In *Crime 27 in the Year 1128* (1954) Thomas tells the story of a murder in Brechtian manner. In his earlier plays, too, experimental techniques such as the chorus, and the use of symbols (a huge Bible, for instance) are employed.

The 'Akhila Kerala Kendra Kalasamiti' based at Calicut was responsible for the production of some important plays in Malayalam. In this connection special mention must be made of the following plays: *Tīkoṇṭu Kaḷikkarutu* (Do Not Play with Fire, 1955) by Uroob; *Kaṇṭam Becca Kōṭṭ* (The Patched-up Coat, 1956) by T. Muhammad Yusuf; *Pranayakātta Amma* (The Barren Mother, 1955) by Tikkodiyan; *Caviṭṭikkuḷacca Maṇṇu* (The Mashed Earth, 1954) by P. A. Warrier and *Taṛavāṭittam* (Aristocracy, 1954) by Cherukad.

Author of experimental plays and the owner of a drama troupe in which he and the members of his family

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important participants, N. N. Pillai (Piḷḷa, b. 1918) has several stage successes to his credit. Pillai, who is erudite, is strongly influenced by Harold Pinter and George Bernard Shaw. In more than one play he employs Pinter's techniques of a room where the characters remain with a threat to them present outside. Such plays are *Wine Glass* (1967) and *Maraṇanṛttam* (Dance of Death, 1967). The latter is a powerful play in which modern techniques are used to create an eerie effect. It is sometimes described as an Absurdist play. The central character—as indeed there is one in all of Pillai's plays—is an elderly doctor who runs a clinic. The story of his previous relationships with his employees and some of the patients are gradually disclosed during the progress of the play. The elderly doctor is a sensual eccentric and his feelings for a young, married nurse are not exactly fatherly. The old man craves for her affection and loads her with expensive presents. Other characters in the play are the nurse's husband, another employee of the nursing home, a female patient and a horrible looking and viciously inclined cook. We have glimpses into the veiled and not too honourable past of the doctor in which the female patient and even the birth of the nurse figure. Due to a conspiracy of circumstances and owing to the personal feelings that each of the characters develop towards the doctor, each of them decides to kill him. But they get only his dead body and they perform their act of killing without knowing that he had already killed himself. Besides the influence of Harold Pinter on the playwright one may also note the influence of the Theatre of Cruelty in this act of ritual killing. The main thrust of Pillai's plays is in their social satire, aimed through fast, crackling dialogue, with frequent overtones of smutty suggestiveness.

The late C. N. Srikanthan Nair employed his considerable dramatic talent in the re-creation of ancient puranic myths and characters in new experimental moulds and speaking new philosophies. He has a trilogy of the Ramayana, namely *Kāñcana Sīta* (The Golden Sita, 1961), *Laṅkālakṣmi* and *Ayōdhyākēṭam* (Ayodhya). We saw that C. J. Thomas too re-created the past in his David play. G. Sankara Pillai (Śaṅkara Piḷḷa, b. 1930), a leader of the amateur theatre movement and a professor of drama, did a secular play on the defeated women in the Mahabharata War. In this play, *Dharmakṣētṛe Kurukṣētṛe* (In the Field of Dharma Called Kuruksetra, 1968), Pillai employs the epic theatre style. Pillai is an inveterate experimentalist, as demonstrated in such plays as *Bandi* (Prisoner, 1967), *Avataraṇam Unmādālayam* (Presented by the Lunatic Asylum, 1976) and *Avatavākyam* (The Final Word, 1972). In *Avataraṇam Unmādālayam*, which is a play about the inmates of a lunatic asylum presenting a play, there are elements of the Brechtian theatre. Alienation is achieved by the audience constantly being made aware of the fact that a play is being played. The very idea of the members of an asylum presenting a play reminds one of Peter Weiss' drama *The Marat Sade*, though the elements of the Theatre of Cruelty for which the latter play is quoted are not present in Pillai's work. Contrastingly one may even say that the total effect of the play is that of a comedy rather than that of violence. Such an effect of violence and its dramatic purpose are found in another of Pillai's plays entitled *Bandi*. Cast in the traditional conceptual mould of good and evil pitted against each other with evil finally reaping the bitter fruit of its own actions, the play would outwardly appear as a traditional one. The prisoner is one of two brothers and the jailor is the other one. The purpose of imprisoning the innocent is to conceal a murder from which the conscience-less one had built his empire of wealth, sex and power. Evil is personified in the character of Bhairavan who guards the innocent brother imprisoned in his own house. The jailed one's girl also is taken away from him by his brother. But Bhairavan finally turns his murderous attention on his master himself and we have him toppled and his bungalow aflame from Bhairavan's torch. Rich in symbolism the play makes a powerful impression. The play beginning and ending with a servant's words to the audience, reminds one of the old *sūṭradhāra* in Sanskrit plays now re-created as a feature of the modern theatre. Pillai however, did not begin his playwright's career as an experimentalist. His early play, *Vilaṅṅum Vīṇayum* (The Chain and the Veena, 1959), for instance, depicts the conflict of individuals in the social background of a tradition-ridden family.

The playwright Omcherry Narayana Pillai, who has written such straightforward comedies of social instruction and entertainment as *I Veḷiccam Niṅṅaḷkkuḷḷatāṇu* (This Light is for You, 1963) and *Itu Nammuṭe Nāṭāṇu* (This is Our Land, 1959), introduces the symbol of an emaciated temple elephant in a rhinoceros-like fashion in his powerful play of social criticism *Tēvaruṭe Āna* (The Deity's Elephant, 1978). The whole play is in the form of a rehearsal and the manager not infrequently addresses the audience directly. It tells the story of a temple elephant which has fallen ill. Around this sick animal, which is a symbol of society, the playwright builds a purposefully disorganized theatre. Several characters appear and interact here. Through them the playwright tells the sad story of the society, its selfishness, hypocrisy and capacity for bungling. Ultimately it turns out that the illness of the elephant is hunger. The drama employs such techniques of the Brechtian theatre as, the play unfolding before the audience as a play, the audience participating in it specifically as a play, employment of poetic passages and purposeful social criticism clothed in art and light-hearted banter. Narayana Pillai's play *Praḷayam* (The Deluge, 1979) is a symbolic work in which powerful symbols like Noah's Ark and the Cross are employed in an exercise of strong social criticism. In this context, one is reminded of a small idol of Kāḷi, the goddess of the age, growing unendingly in C. N. Srikanthan Nair's play *Kali* (1977), even as a dead body expands in Ionesco's

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world. K. T. Muhammed's *Sṛṣṭi* (Creation, 1972) has the worlds of fact and fantasy combined and the pathetic theme of waiting for someone is rather blandly stated in a tragedy which moves along the path of comedy. Muhammed, perpetually experimenting, has moved a long way from the days of his hilarious social play, *Itu Bhūmiyāṇu* (This is Earth). He now moves in the company of such mutually incomparables as Cocteau and Beckett.

Kavalam Narayana Panickkar (Nārāyaṇa Paṇikkar, b. 1928) is an experimenter with what is described as the indigenous theatre (*tanatu nāṭakavēdi*). His play *Avanavan Kaṭampa* (To Each Man His Hurdle, 1978) has a rather tenuous story and uses the old indigenous visual arts like the play of the Kākkāns (see beginning of article) as its main attraction. But such plays have invited the criticism that they are, perhaps, no plays at all.

We have, thus, an expanding area of experimentation in contemporary Malayalam drama. These playwrights are influenced by the contemporary western play in, at least, form, and have more or less, rejected realism, though in different ways. But there are others like C. L. Jose and S. L. Puram Sadanandan whose plays are along the traditional lines in form and formula. To Jose, life moves along the two rails of good for the good, and bad for the bad and his plays are, in a way, didactic. His play *Karutta Veḷiccam* (Black Light, 1964) is a medley of sentimental scenes in which melodrama has not been kept out. S. L. Puram Sadanandan has, among his numerous plays, a straightforward political drama *Satṛam* (The Guest House, 1969) on the problems which faced Kerala's Communist Ministry in 1957. The play is naturally dated. In more than one play Sadanandan has worked on the theme of the misled woman, at first humiliated and jilted by male guile and cruelty, but finally asserting her dignity. *Agniputṛi* (The Daughter of Fire, 1969) and *Kuṛaccə̄ Aṛiyuka Ēṛe Viśvasikkuka* (Know Little, Believe More, 1960) may be mentioned here. This is also more or less the theme of P. R. Chandran's *Ahalya* (1970), N. N. Pillai's *Kāpālika* (1971) and the much earlier *Taptabāṣpam* (Scalding Tears, 1934) of Kuttanad Ramakrishna Pillai (Kuṭṭanāḍ Rāmakṛṣṇa Piḷḷa, b. 1919). Mention may also be made of Jagathi N. K. Achari's farces and historical plays, and also K. Surendran's problem plays.

The One-Act Play

The one-act play is a poor relation of the longer play in Malayalam.

The reason is not far to seek. It is not encouraged by the theatre. However, most of the major playwrights have written occasional one-act plays and brought out collections. Some plays like Omcherry's *Daivam Viṇṭum Teṭṭiddharikkunnu* (God Misunderstands Again, 1961), Kainikkara Kumara Pillai's *Vivāhakkāryam* (A Matter of Marriage), Cherukad's *Muḷamkūṭṭam* (A Bamboo Bush, 1958) and Tikkotiyan's *Anxiety Neurosis* (1957) are among those with significant themes.

The Radio Play

A large number of plays are now presented through the radio stations of Kerala. But very few, indeed, have become significant literature. Among the published ones may be mentioned *Aśarīri* (The Voice without a Body) by Anandakkuttan, *Asati* (1967) by N. V. Krishna Varrier (Kṛṣṇa Vārier, b. 1916), *Ompatu Rēḍio Nāṭakaṅṅaḷ* and *Rēḍionāṭakaṅṅal* (Nine Radio Plays, 1957; Radio Plays, 1947) by K. M. George (b. 1914), *Taraṅgaraṅgam* (The Play of the Waves) by S. K. Nayar (b. 1916), *Rāvaṇan* (1959) and *Bharatan* (1955) by Kuttanad Ramakrishna Pillai and *Tiraññeṭutta Rēḍio Nāṭakaṅṅaḷ* (Selected Radio Plays, 1917) by V. Madhavan Nair (Mādhavan Nāyar, b. 1915).

The Theatre and The Drama

When Kerala Varma translated *Śākuntaḷa* about a hundred years ago, it was staged by a drama troupe called Manomohanam (Manōmōhanam) Company, headed by Tiruvattar Narayana Pillai. The popularity of the translation was augmented by its stage-production. Later, Tamil drama companies arrived. Malayalam musicals were also staged. There was also a period when handsome young men like Ochira Velukkutty with great singing voices played women's roles in such plays as *Karuṇa*. We also saw the K. P. A. C. (Kerala People's Arts Club), a professional drama troupe doing yeoman service in popularizing political plays. In a state-wide contest for the best drama production by the professional theatre, twenty companies participated in 1979. As for the commercial theatre there have been only or two companies. One which has presented plays off and on and which has, in recent years, made an impression is Kalanilayam Theatres. As far as an amateur theatre is concerned, there is no group really compelling notice except immature and untrained school and college groups and a few experimental theatre groups. It is, however, interesting to note that the Best National Actor Award in cinema recently went to Gopi who has an amateur theatre background. There is no doubt that such talented amateur actors as P. K. Vikraman Nair, C. I. Parameswaran Pillai, Kainikkara Kumara Pillai, P. J. Antony and Virarāghavan (P. K. Vīrarāghavan Nāir) and those like T. R. Sukumaran Nair, Premji (M. P. Bhattatirippad), Kuṅṅāṇṭi, Mavelikkara Ponnamma and Gopi, have contributed to the growth of the drama in Malayalam. But whether the amateur theatre has been adequate and whether what has existed has been an umixed good, are questions requiring careful consideration.

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The growth of drama, as a visual art and as literature, doubtless, requires an adequate theatre. But a play being visually impressive need not necessarily guarantee its being an all-time dramatic literature of excellence, although experience on the stage might lead a dramatist to improve his text. Restrictions in staging possibilities, such as limited or unsuitable acting personnel and inadequate stage settings can cramp a playwright's style and scope. Kerala needs an amateur theatre movement with expertise and professional theatre with discretion to benefit Malayalam drama.

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Marathi

R. V. DHONGDE

The Origins

There are several opinions on the origin of the Marathi theatre. The most widely accepted view is that the first Marathi play was written and staged by Viṣṇudas Bhāve in 1843 with the support of the Raja of Sangli, who was a patron of the Parsee and English theatres in Bombay. The play, *Sītā Swayamwar* (Sita's Wedding), was in verse form and was based on the Puranas. The origin of the theatre has been traced two centuries further back by some. The evidence is the thirty-four plays that were composed in Marathi during the 17th and 18th centuries, manuscripts of which were found in the Saraswati Mahal Library at Thanjavur. Recently it has been argued that the theatre owes its origin to the Konkani folk art form called the *Daśāvatāri Ciel* (a folk-play representing the ten incarnations of Vishnu, peculiar to Goa and the Konkan region). It is not totally impossible for one to claim that the Marathi theatre stems from old Marathi folk arts such as the *Tamāśā* (an old folk art which narrates a story using music and dance), the *Bhāruḍ* (a folk-song, with characters in it, conveying a moral) or the *Lalit* (a dramatic performance on a festive occasion, usually secular in character).

The development of the art of a people has the inherent limits of the degree of enlightenment of the people, but it does not necessarily evolve out of it. It is true that Sanskrit had a rich theatre tradition, but it is futile to link the Marathi theatre directly with it. It is also true that the period from 1840 to 1880 was, in Maharashtra, a period of enlightenment (which cannot be called a Renaissance as it was confined to the elite, and as it was not an inner-motivated growth). A spirit of criticism, a selective glorification of the past, a thirst for English education for the sake of national revival, were its characteristics. But it is unfair to say that the advent of the Marathi theatre during this period was a direct borrowing from or even a grafting of the British theatre. No popular art develops unless it is in step with its people and this is ruled out in mere transplantation. The rise of the Marathi theatre thus seems to be a cumulative effect of various factors, and, broadly speaking, the urge

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for revival and new education found its expression in the theatre.

Kirloskar and the Early Years

Vishnudas Bhave's own troupe and P. R. Datar's troupe, called the Ichalkaranjikar Natak Mandali, which staged V. J. Kirtane's *Thorale Mādhavrāv Peśave* (Madhavrao Peshva the Elder) the first original Marathi play, in 1865 marks the beginning of the profession of dramatic companies in Maharashtra. But its full impact and significance were felt only when in 1880 B. P., *alias* Annasaheb Kirlosakar, formed his own troupe, the Kirloskar Natak Mandali. Bhave's troupe performed plays in a rough fashion. The script would be in verse narrating a mythological story familiar to the audience. The actors depended heavily on miming, there was no stage property and no scenery. V. J. Kirtane's *Thorale Mādhavrāv Peśave* and M. B. Chitale's *Manoramā* (1871), the first Marathi play to show some awareness of contemporary problems—made the actors speak set dialogues. Kirloskar, producer-director and dramatist, in his earlier plays such as *Śaṅkar Digvijay* (Conquering of the Four Quarters by Shankaracharya, 1875) shows the influence of Bhave's *Ākhyān* type (a narrative with a moral) plays. But he was quick to discern its limitations and intelligent enough to take stock of the situation around him.

Bombay University, founded in 1857, had sent out its first generation of university graduates by 1875. Kirloskar had witnessed the performance of English plays by the Parsee Elphinstone Dramatic Society organized by college students, and of translated Sanskrit plays by the Hindu Kalidas Elphinstone Dramatic Society. Both the amateur groups—from Bombay—show some tendencies of the elite of that time: it welcomed what was good in the western tradition without losing sight of their heritage. Kirloskar made use of the British tradition on the Marathi stage. He translated Kalidas' *Śākuntalam* in 1880 to suit the structure of the new theatre. He got rid of the *ākhyān* type narration, introduced prose dialogues, used rolling curtains for scenes and also stage property. His *Saubhadra* (1882) has been regarded as the first classical play of the Marathi theatre. It is a comedy that gives a domestic treatment to a mythological theme.

The verse form was not, however, entirely given up by Kirloskar. Though the dialogues are in prose, *Saubhadra* contains many songs that are a sort of a continuation of the dialogue. Another achievement of Kirloskar that has left a permanent mark on the Marathi stage was that he made the actors sing the songs assigned to them. For music, he turned to the Marathi folk-verse forms, such as the *lāvaṇi* (a kind of song, usually but not always amorous), the *kaṭāv* (a kind of verse form) and the *diḍṇi* (a song sung by devotees moving in two rows, swaying to its rhythm). He effected a blend of the 'Kirtana' style, Karnataka music and the North Indian classical music. The innovation became so popular that, since that time, the Marathi theatre has had a distinctive tradition of the *Sangīt Nāṭak* (musical play). Kirloskar was probably influenced by the operatic plays on the British stage, but the Marathi *Sangīt Nāṭak* was never quite an opera, it combined prose dialogue with songs. The Kirloskar Natak Mandali later had singer-actors, like Bhaurao Kolhatkar, who were responsible for the popularity of the *Sangīt Nāṭak*. Songs were included even for Shakuntala in the Marathi adaptation of *Śākuntalam*.

A Transitional Phase

The period from 1870 to 1890 in Marathi literature shows a transitional phase. The study of Sanskrit literature, of the poetry of the pandits written after the Sanskrit models, and of saint poetry were pursued along with that of English literature. But there was no real taste for serious secular literature. As a result, on the stage, we find an abundance of the 'prince-meets-princess' stories. There also seems to be a tendency for westernized manners which was appreciated by the conservative middle class that opposed social reforms. N. B. Kanitkar's *Taruṇi Śikṣaṇ* (Education of Young Women, 1886) represents this tendency. Such plays, which lacked literary qualities, set a tradition of 'popular' playwriting which is present even today. During the period 1885 to 1905 this tradition was particularly active. The life-stories of Marathi saints, highlighting the supernatural and miraculous elements in them, were frequently dramatized. Even novelists like H. N. Apte, who had written realistic social novels, could not resist the temptation. The growing feeling of nationalism was fully exploited in the writing of pseudo-historical plays such as *Rāṇā Bhīmdev* (King Bhimdev, 1891) by V. R. Shirvalkar and Modak. The foreign or western models for imitation were Sheridan (especially his *Pizzaro*) and Victor Hugo, and even Shakespeare could not escape being aligned with them.

While the novel sought new stories, drama depended heavily on mythology, history and English plays. Since the theatre was confined to the cities and relied for approval on the elite, translations of English plays were in demand. Even today a large section of the Marathi drama is cut off from the masses; it has hardly any roots in the life of the people and is satisfied with imperfect adaptations of European plays. During the period 1870 to 1910 a large number of Shakespearian plays were translated and enacted for limited audiences.

Between 1890 and 1920

The period from 1890 to 1920 was a period of revolutionary changes in Marathi literature. In poetry Keshavsut started a new trend; in fiction H. N. Apte laid the foun-

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tion of the realistic social novel; in prose great writers like B. G. Tilak used devices till then unknown to Marathi literature, such as irony, satire and ruthless polemics with the subtlety, flexibility and richness of the spoken language. It was during this period that four major Marathi dramatists did their work—G. B. Deval, K. P. Khadilkar, K. P. Kolhatkar and R. G. Gadkari.

G. B. Deval. G. B. Deval (1855–1916), a close associate of Kirloskar, made a significant contribution to the Marathi stage. Being a producer-director, he had first-hand knowledge of the theatre, as well as great insight into the Sanskrit dramatic tradition. His earlier plays were a failure, but he understood the growing popularity of the *Sangīt Nāṭak* and based *Mricchakaṭik* (The Little Clay-Cart, 1890) on Shudraka's *Mricchakaṭikam*; *Jhunjārrāv* (1890) on Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Samśayakalloḷ* (A Melee of Suspicions, 1893, musical version in 1916) on Murphy's *All in the Wrong*, a minor 18th-century play. Deval's plays pose a literary problem. Drama is essentially a culture-bound art, not only because of its themes but because it depends heavily on the other performing arts of a given society, such as music and dance, and even on painting, for its visual effects. Presenting a drama belonging to a foreign culture, therefore involves many problems. The behaviour patterns of a society, its social ethics and prejudices, socio-religious symbolism, cultural traditions, the nature of the conceptual framework of a society and the linguistic peculiarities of that language, are not easily transferable. It is true that a great play has a universal appeal, but this appeal ultimately stems from a solid cultural base; therefore a mere translation of a foreign play—even if the translation is perfect—is often doomed to failure. Before Deval, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, had been translated. G. G. Agarkar's *Vikāravilasit* (Play of Emotions, 1883) is a literal translation of *Hamlet*, and yet it does not give the audience either Shakespeare's philosophy or present the character of Hamlet with its full tragic significance. In fact, Agarkar reproduced only the text of Shakespeare, but missed his poetry and world-view. One cannot, perhaps, expect more from a person like Agarkar, who was basically a journalist and a social reformer. One also wonders whether such poor translations of Shakespeare were the result of the translation methods taught in India. This is not to claim that Deval understood Shakespeare fully; but he had sufficient discretion to adopt a play that was easier and more suitable to the Marathi stage. In the case of *Mricchakaṭik*, Deval occasionally surpasses even the original as when he makes a simple song out of a complex Sanskrit *śloka*. Deval's skill in adaptation is revealed at its best, in *Samśayakalloḷ*. Murphy's play, an ordinary one, has been forgotten by the British, but Deval's has stood the test of time.

Deval's success lies in his first-hand knowledge of the Marathi theatre, and the freshness and simplicity of his language. His only original play, *Śāradā* (1819), deals with a social problem—that of child marriage. Deval has adopted the structure of the traditional Sanskrit drama. The play shows his skill in writing natural and lively dialogue, in the subtleties of characterization, in composing simple, meaningful songs, in exposing a social evil without resorting to propaganda. *Śāradā* has been listed as a play second only to *Saubhadra* in its wide appeal.

Deval and Kirloskar brought some prestige to the theatre profession. Every society has its priorities and they are graded on two scales—financial and moral. These priorities in scales may be questioned on various grounds, but their order is not wrong as it is decided by experience. For example, one can regret the neglect of the theatrical profession on artistic grounds, but one cannot condemn social disapproval of it as baseless. The Kirloskar Natak Mandali tried to dispel social misgivings about the profession by establishing contacts with recognized leaders such as B. G. Tilak, by getting college professors like V. B. Patvardhan and V. B. Kelkar to guide the actors, and even by setting strict norms of behaviour. Needless to say, after Deval the theatrical profession went back to its earlier position until 1933 when a group called 'Nāṭyamanvantar', raised its standards though it lasted for a short time only. It was only after 1960, that some groups of amateur players could stake a similar claim for social approval of the theatre as a profession.

The Leading Natak Mandalis. The Kirloskar Natak Mandali staged plays by Kirloskar, Deval, Kolhatkar, Khadilkar and Gadkari. At the beginning it was a troupe of dedicated amateurs. They worked as a team giving equal importance to the playwright, producer-director, and the actors. The parallel example in the field of cinema later was that of the Prabhat Film Company. Their quick disintegration was predictable. The result was an emergence of several dramatic companies that depended on single individuals—mostly actors—and could therefore neither achieve development of the dramatic art, nor function as training centres for newcomers. Thus there were three major *Sangīt Nāṭak* troupes: the Gandharva Natak Mandali headed by Narayan Rajahans *alias* Balgandharva, the Balavant Sangeet Natak Mandali headed by Deenanath Mangeshkar and the Lalitkaladarsha Mandali headed by Keshavrao Bhosale (and later by V. B. Pendharkar). The Lalitkaladarsha produced V. G. Joshi's (Veer Vamanrao, pseud.: Vāman Gopāḷ Jośī, 1881–1956) *Rākṣasi Mahatwākāṅśā* (The Demonic Ambition) in 1914. The Balawant Sangeet Natak Mandali produced his *Raṇadundubhi* (War Drum) in 1927. V. G. Joshi was a well-known writer and critic, but his plays failed to satisfy expectations. The Maharashtra Natak Mandali, which had dramatists like Vishnupant H. Aundhkar and actors like Keshavrao Date,

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produced non-musical plays that have been wrongly labelled 'prose-plays'.

The Victorian stage did not accept challenges, nor did it make a significant contribution to the development of the English stage. It had actor-oriented companies, and even in the production of Shakespearian plays it depended heavily on lavish settings and melodramatic effects. Unfortunately this was a model for the Marathi stage. It added to the misconception of Shakespearian plays. For playwrights like K. P. Khadilkar, Shakespeare meant soliloquies, declamatory speeches, loud settings and costumes and melodramatic rather than tragic endings. K. P. Khadilkar's *Savāi Mādhavrāv Yāñcā Mṛuttyu* (The Death of Savai Madhavrao), staged in 1906, is a good illustration. The play is said to have been influenced by Shakespeare's two unparallelled characters, Hamlet and Iago, but is devoid of Shakespeare's poetry, intensity and tragic vision.

K. P. Khadilkar. A close associate of Lokmanya Tilak, Khadilkar (1872–1948) tried to use drama as a means of arousing public anger against the repressive British rule. He took themes from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Maratha history, and used oblique allusions to contemporary political life. His *Kīcakavadha* (The Killing of Kichaka) staged in 1907 by the Maharashtra Natak Mandali became popular at once, as it attacked the regime of the unpopular Viceroy, Lord Curzon. Consequently the play was banned by the government. Whatever may be the literary merits and flaws of Khadilkar's political plays and their artistic success or failure, it cannot be denied that he established a tradition of political plays in Marathi which was taken up later by dramatists like Vasudevshastri V. Khare, Vishnupant Aundhkar, Y. N. Tipnis, V. G. Joshi, B. V. Varerkar, and V. D. Savarkar, though none of these excelled Khadilkar in skill, or in popularity.

As a dramatist Khadilkar had three phases: in the first phase he tried to imitate Shakespeare, but failed, as he had limited talent; in the second phase he wrote political plays that served their purpose, but failed as literature; in the third phase he constructed plays out of mythological stories to suit a particular actor-singer-Balgandharva, and this phase shows a commercialized dramatist devoid of any literary quality or aesthetic sense. It would be better to say that Khadilkar composed songs to suit the tunes supplied to him, and built dialogues around them, and put them all into the loose framework of a story which cannot be called a plot.

Vidyāharaṇa (Snatching of Knowledge, 1913), *Mānāpmāna* (Honour and Dishonour, 1911) and *Swayamvara* (1916) became very popular as musical plays. These and similar plays made of Balgandharva a legend as a singer-actor, unmatched in the history of the Marathi theatre. He played the heroines—Bhamini, Rukmini, Draupadi, Menaka—in Khadilkar's plays. He had a melodious voice, an expressive face and a charming figure. A majority of the songs in these plays were sung by him, and a play would sometimes last for eight hours.

Though poor in literary qualities, Khadilkar's musical plays, and Balgandharva's acting and singing left a permanent mark on the Marathi theatre. Their popularity was so irresistible that even Deval had to turn his originally non-musical play into a musical one called *Samśaykallol*; and Marathi playwrights for the following forty years had to add a few songs to their plays in order to make them commercially successful. There are critics who condemn the dominance of music on the Marathi stage and hold it responsible for the later downfall of Marathi theatrical art. No doubt, the Marathi audience was so fascinated by music that they tolerated shabby scripts, poor acting and indifferent stage production. But the *Sangīt Nāṭak* as a form was not inherently defective, or detrimental to the progress of theatrical art.

It must be granted that one of Maharashtra's contributions to the Indian enlightenment was the rehabilitation of Hindustani classical music. Maharashtra not only revived it, but established its schools and traditions. It was the Marathi theatre—especially the *Sangīt Nāṭak*—that popularized it and created a solid base for it among the people. Before condemning the dominance of music on the stage, one must appreciate the foresight of the Marathi producer-directors and playwrights in harnessing the art to serve the stage and thereby evolving a new form of drama. South India has a long tradition of Indian classical dance, but it is not used in the service of drama. (The *Yakśagāna* is basically a dance-performance, not a drama-performance; the European opera is basically a music-performance, not a drama-performance; the Marathi *Sangīt Nāṭak* is basically a drama-performance, not a music-performance.) In modern times in the production of Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghāśirām Kotvāl*, the Marathi theatrical art has introduced another innovation—the use of dance—(but not a classical dance form)—to serve the stage. It is to be seen whether it will ultimately evolve a new form of Marathi drama.

S. K. Kolhatkar. Like Khadilkar, S. K. Kolhatkar (1871–1934)—who enjoyed at one time a reputation out of proportion to the quality of his plays— took from Shakespeare not the essentials of his art but the kind of tricks that catered to an immature audience—like the use of disguise, birth-secrets, subplots, etc.; punning, too, but Kolhatkar as a humorist in his own right took punning in his stride. He also drew from Moliere, in structuring his plays, in lively dialogue and in the exposure of social ills.

Kolhatkar wrote twelve plays in all. The more important among them are *Vīrtanaya* (The Hero's Son, 1898), *Mūknāyaka* (The Mute Hero, 1901), *Mativikār* (The Mind Affected, 1906), *Premśodhan* (Love Purified, 1908) and *Vadhuparikśa* (Examining a Would-be Bride, 1913). Of

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plicated plots, making undue use of mystery and surprise, and artificialities of style weaken the total effect of these plays, some of which had a serious purpose—like warning people against the evil of drinking (in *Mūknāyaka*), or defending widow remarriage (in *Mativikār*). The characters talk wittily or poetically, but the wit and the poetry are not always integral to the play. Nor are the songs, the diction of which are unusually laboured, the words somehow forced into a musical mould that caught the writer's fancy. Kolhatkar was a connoisseur of music himself; and the tune seemed to mean far more to him than the words.

R. G. Gadkari. The last dramatist in the Kirloskar-Deval line was R. G. Gadkari (1885–1919). He was superior to Khadilkar as a dramatist. He infused poetry into drama, wrote poetic soliloquies in imitation of Shakespeare which, at their best, are full of fancy and exuberant diction and, at their worst, a mere parading of sentiments. He had a boisterous sense of the comic, and some of his characters could be called immortal. It was S. K. Kolhatkar who first started using consciously, ornate language in plays. In Gadkari, who worshipped S. K. Kolhatkar as his guru, this style reached its culmination. Gadkari's poetry and plays show a consciously and carefully cultivated literary style that developed new derivations in word-rhythm, in exploring alternate sentence-variations, in playing on words and making puns, in preparing deceptively condensed expressions and expansions that were mere repetitions. In Gadkari's hands expression overrode thought and even scored at the expense of thought. The style was outwardly so fascinating that it dangerously invited imitation which later novelists like V. S. Khandekar, and modern dramatists like V. V. Shirwadkar, Vasant Kanetkar and Madhusudan Kalekar could not resist.

Like Deval, Gadkari shows subtlety and depth of characterization in his plays such as *Puṇṇyaprabhāv* (The Spell of Virtue, 1916), *Bhāvabandhan* (The Tie of Sentiment, 1919). His *Ekach Pyālā* (Only One More Goblet, 1920) is the only Marathi play of that time that approaches a tragedy and it is this success that makes his position secure in the history of Marathi drama.

After 1920

The later years of the period that witnessed revolutionary changes in Marathi literature show an attenuation of the initial impulse. H. N. Apte's later novels are no comparison to his earlier ones. In several other writers Maratha history was romanticized, mythology served as an escape and social purpose was reduced to moral preaching. Khadilkar's later plays such as *Draupadi*, *Menakā* and *Sāvitri* also illustrate the dying urge. There were now many mediocre dramatists who did the sole work of providing new scripts to the various dramatic troupes following the laws of demand and supply.

After Lokmanya Tilak's death in 1920, Maharashtra suffered a setback in politics. The British policy became one of ruthless repression. The educated middle class succumbed to the pressure. Indians were denied positions of initiative and power in the government administration; trade had already gone into the hands of other communities in Bombay. A few courageous souls turned to dreams of armed revolution and acts of terrorism, but the majority remained inactive and confused. Mahatma Gandhi started broadening the base of the freedom struggle by involving the masses in it. The middle class lost its pre-eminence in politics and tried to stay aloof from the masses. It sought refuge in the legends of Shivaji and even of Tilak. In dramatic literature, therefore, historical plays such as *Bebandaśāhi* (Anarchy, 1924) and *Āgryāhūn Suṭakā* (Escape from Agra, 1930) by Vishnupant Aundhkar became popular. Aundhkar was a producer-director in the Samarth Natak Mandali. The spread of education had increased the number of literate persons; but the expansion was in quantity, not in quality. And these audiences liked plays in the tradition of *Rāṇā Bhīmdev*. B. V. Varerkar's *Karīn Ti Purva* (I am Monarch of All I Survey, 1923), Y. N. Tipnis' *Śahā Śivāji* (Sahaji and Sivaji, 1921) and *Śikkā Kaṭyār* (The Seal and the Dagger); N. C. Kelkar's *Totayāce Baṇḍa* (The Revolt of the Pretender, 1915) and V. G. Deshpande's *Umāji Nāik* (1934) belong to this tradition. Obviously none of these plays tried to interpret history or to highlight any neglected historical facts. But they brought into prominence actors like Keshavrao Date and Nanba Gokhale.

Another characteristic of the middle class of this period that started retiring into a shell was the self-indulgent romanticization of the freedom struggle or the working-class struggle. The plays *Sattece Gulām* (Slaves of Power, 1922), *Sonyācā Kaḷas* (The Pinnacle of Gold, 1932) by B. V. Varerkar (1883–1964) are representative of this attitude. *Sonyācā Kaḷas* represents the struggle between capital and labour in the Bombay textile mills. The play is influenced by Galsworthy's *Strife*. In fact, Varerkar consciously tried to get rid of the clutches of the *Sangīt Nāṭak* and the so-called Shakespearean frame of Marathi drama. Instead of Shakespeare, he wanted to bring Ibsen, Moliere and Shaw to the Marathi stage. But just as Shakespeare was misunderstood by the Marathi playwrights, the realistic drama of Ibsen, Shaw and Galsworthy was also equally misunderstood by them. Varerkar chose themes from common life not so much because he felt the human drama in them as because they enabled him to write plays on currently popular topics. His *Hāc Mulācā Bāp* (So Here's the Bridegroom's Father, 1917) does not expose the deterioration of human values in the dowry system but was an attempt to exploit the sensation caused by the self-immolation of a Bengali girl, Snehalata, in protest against the dowry system. It is ironic that Varerkar who upheld realism and rejected the *Sangīt Nāṭak* had to depend on unrealistic incidents

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and characters in his plays and even to include songs in his script. No doubt he made some attempts to introduce changes. His themes were contemporary. He wrote simple, realistic dialogues; he introduced acts without scenes in them; he reduced the length of the play (he wrote some one-act plays as well); he did without soliloquies, and instead of the rolling curtains he introduced box-sets that covered all the three sides of the stage. But he could not stop the rapid deterioration of the Marathi stage in spite of his scripts, commentary and the criticism of his predecessors.

The Decline of the Theatre

The period from 1920 to 1945 was devoid of any noteworthy changes in life and literature in Maharashtra. At best, there were some expansions. Educational programmes included the lower classes and women, on a larger scale. Cities began to be industrialized. Social reforms were identified with the clashes between castes. The joint-family system received a blow. Journalism became popular. Art was viewed as a means of entertainment and instruction which could be just propaganda. Poetry was popularized by its public recitals. The college girl became the focus of poetry and fiction. A young man's love for a girl was often mixed with his love for the cause of his country, and both being superficial, a happy solution was easy to manipulate. Most of the literary works in this period can be explained in terms of its milieu and age as there were hardly any great talent—and in the field of drama there was none.

All the drama companies were in financial difficulties. They could not attract new talented actors, nor could they get dramatists of worth to give them their new plays. The only actors of some distinction who made their career during this period were Chintamanrao Kolhatkar and Nana Phatak, and the only dramatists worth mentioning were P. K. Atre and M. G. Rangnekar. Attempts were made by non-professionals to form theatrical troupes. They were supported by educated middle-class men and women. In 1932, for example, there was an amateur group called the Radio Stars which lasted for a year. In 1933 another troupe called the Natyamanvantar tried to present modern European realistic plays of ideas. It opened with S. V. Vartak's *Āndhaḷyānci Śāḷā* (The School for the Blind) in 1933 in which Jyotsna Bhole played the role of Bimba, the heroine; and suddenly, as it were, it was realized how unnatural and absurd it was for men to play female roles. Within a few years, the absurdity became a thing of the past. The play presents a middle-class ethical problem unfolding the past of its characters but ultimately provides a sentimental compromise. Natyamanvantar also produced new plays such as *Lapaṇḍāv* (Hide and Seek) and *Takṣaśilā*. As expected, the group had a short life of two or three years.

Since drama had become only a form of entertainment, it did not exploit the special advantages of the theatrical art. The audience sought another entertainment at this time, which was not worse than drama but cheaper. It was the film. In 1931, the first Marathi sound film—*Ayodhyecā Rājā* (The King of Ayodhya)—was produced. The Prabhat Film Company was formed in 1929. It was composed of talented young men who were genuinely interested in film-making. The Marathi films produced by Prabhat gave everything that the Marathi drama gave: spectacular settings, rich costumes and songs. This was not a happy situation for the aesthetics of cinema, but it worsened the already deteriorating condition of the Marathi theatre. It was only to be expected that the Prabhat Film Company in order to attract the middle-class audience produced historicals that were crude and lifeless, devotionals that were a little better for their humanistic approach, and social plays that handled middle-class themes superficially with a sentimental approach in the same way as the so-called realistic drama did. In Vinayak's films, for example, humour was confined to dialogues, the compositions were frontal as if film-making was the same as shooting a stage-play.

P. K. Atre. It is against this background that P. K. Atre (1893–1969) with a great reputation as a humorist behind him, started his career as a dramatist. His *Sāṣṭāṅg Namaskār* (The Prostrate Obeisance) was staged in 1933 by the Balmohan Natak Mandali. Atre wrote a large number of plays and excellent verse parodies of the pseudo-romantic poetry of the twenties. He was a successful journalist, public orator and politician. He wrote a few serious plays such as *Gharābāher* (Out of the Home, 1934) and *Udyācā Saṁsār* (The Family Life of Tomorrow, 1935). But it was not in his nature to be serious. Soon he gave up imitating Ibsen. In *Lagnāci Beḍi* (The Shackles of Marriage, 1936) he tried to present a serious problem but mixed so much humour with it that it never appealed as a problem play. He soon realized that humour was his forte and wrote many farcical comedies. Perhaps he had noted the earlier success of M. N. Joshi's *Myunisipāliṭi* (Municipality, 1915) which ridiculed the malpractices in the municipality. Atre styled himself a disciple of Gadkari, which he was in some ways. Puns, exaggeration and biting sarcasm are the three main sources of his comic humour, but he could never handle satire or irony. Just as his contemporaries indulged in sentimentality, Atre indulged in comic humour. He sacrificed characterization, the theme and even logical consistency for the sake of humour.

The neglect of drama as a form of art was complete in Atre's time. Drama became only a cheap means of entertainment, and entertainment was equated with laughter. Only the aural aspect was exploited, as Atre's humour was confined to words. Up to 1960 therefore Atre's plays were

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preferred by the college dramatic societies: they demanded no thespian gifts, and they kept the theatre noisy with laughter. But Atre taught the middle class to laugh, to enjoy and to forget petty troubles. And he helped the Marathi drama profession survive.

M. G. Rangnekar. Another attempt to revive the dying Marathi stage was made by M. G. Rangnekar (b. 1907), a journalist of repute, and his troupe, called the Natyaniketan. Rangnekar was playwright, producer and director. Twisting Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, as it were, the heroine of *Kulavadhū* (The Well-bred Young Wife, 1942), his most successful play, criticizes the selfishness of her husband and leaves his house in order to join her in-laws who, she finds, are more understanding and more humane. Rangnekar wrote a large number of plays, all of them middle-class drawing-room comedies. As a director, Rangnekar tried to modernize the prevailing stage technique.

The Modern Period

The period from 1943 onwards may be called the modern period for several reasons. The Second World War had started serious rethinking of the basic norms in all fields and given a jolt to the sensibility of the educated people. The Marathi writers became conscious of a wider reference to their works. The educated people became conscious of the problems not only of Maharashtra, or of India, but of the world. There was thus a widening of horizons. Along with English literature, modern European literature—through the medium of English—began to attract attention. Freedom brought a sense of fulfilment, though it failed to bring a sense of independence in thinking. Though the middle class still remained the centre of culture, it moved farther away from the political or financial centres.Two social attitudes soon became apparent: a few tried to join the mainstream of social and political change; a majority, however, tried to keep aloof. This is the reason why no political novel or political drama of any literary merit was written for quite a long time. The means of keeping oneself aloof were several. One of them was to glorify the past; especially the Peshwa period of Maratha history, in the novels and the plays. Thus there were novels like *Svāmi* (The Master, 1960) by Ranjit Desai and plays like *Dusarā Peśavā* (The Second Peshwa, 1947) by V. V. Shirwadkar and *Hi Śrinci Icchā* (This is What God Wills, 1974). Another was to romanticize rural life. A trend closely related to this is to depict the new centre of power in the rural life in dark colours. The Patil was thus made a villain in many Marathi so-called regional novels and short stories. The third means was to neglect the social context, the literary tradition, and to identify oneself with foreign social contexts and literary traditions. The only creative activity of this group—which was and is extremely limited in number—was to translate foreign works of art or to imitate them. In this, poetry and drama were the main areas of activity. Thus Camus, Tennessee Williams, Edward Albee, Jean Paul Sartre, Eugene Ionesco, Bertoldt Brecht and many others were translated into Marathi. The fourth means was to be content with one's own lot, to imagine one's domestic worries as universal problems, to talk about one's petty sorrows as the sorrows of humanity. The approach of this group was inevitably sentimental. A quick and ad hoc philosophization was its characteristic. This means was used in poetry, fiction, drama and films. Plays like *Vāhato Hi Durvānci Juḍi* (I Offer this Sacred Grass, 1964) by Bal Kolhatkar and *Divā Jaḷū De Sāri Rāt* (Let the Light Burn All Night, 1965) by Madhusudan Kalelkar are examples of this trend. This is not to deny that no artistic attempts were made at all in literature. But in drama they were very few.

In modern times literature has not remained any more the common heritage of a speech community—and educated speech communities by being multilingual are exposed to the literatures of different languages. The reading populace therefore does not form a homogeneous group; and according to the development of literary taste, the degree of literary sensibility, social attitudes and world-views, every speech community is again divided into different groups that appreciate a particular kind of literature. Broadly speaking, there are three levels: the highbrow literature, the popular literature and the lowbrow literature (or 'footpath' literature as it is sometimes called after the roadside stalls of cheap novels, songbooks and the like). Marathi drama, in modern times, functions at all the three levels. It is possible to find a dramatist working at two levels, just as it is possible to find in a play characteristics belonging to different levels.

The Popular Drama. In the lowbrow drama entertainment is the only aim. There are several dramatists who write plays that are forgotten within a year. The dramatic companies that stage them are commercially oriented. The themes are domestic, the treatment sentimental, the humour cheap and the acting below average. Sometimes, trick-scenes and gaudy costumes are used. A still more artistically degenerated version of the lowbrow drama is a form of drama that mixes *tamāśā* with drama. The *tamāśā* is an old folk art which narrates a story, using folk music and dance with extempore comments on current topics of interest. It attracts the half-educated villagers and the illiterates among the urban middle class. Such plays cannot be classified as drama; they are urbanized *tamāśās*.

The popular drama is commercially successful and attracts a large section of playgoers. It is in continuation with the earlier tradition though it has made certain changes to suit the changing times. The popular plays can be divided into different groups. At the bottom one finds plays that continue the earlier tradition of popular playwriting of

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dramatists who wrote plays on the lives of saints. Nanasaheb Shirgopikar's *Bhāv Toci Dev* (Faith is God, 1965) is its modern descendant. A little music, a little dancing and trick-scenes, are new additions to its technique. Then there are plays that deal with history and mythology. They appeal to sentiment, indulge in flowery, artificial language, and heavily depend on expensive sets and costumes. They lack depth and subtlety in characterization, a sense of proportion in plot-designs, and expect the audience to be overwhelmed by feeling. Vasant Kanetkar's *Ithe Ośāḷalā Mṛuttyu* (Death Stood Abashed Here, 1968) and V. V. Shirwadkar's poetic drama *Vīj Mhaṇāli Dhartilā* (The Lightning Said to the Earth, 1970) are two examples provided by distinguished writers.

The Musical Play. The *Sangīt Nāṭak* was never really extinct on the Marathi stage. After Khadilkar, plays were not written for the sake of music, but even the social plays that claimed to be written in the Ibsen style, did incorporate a few songs. B. V. Varerkar who came to despise the *Sangīt Nāṭak* wrote *Kunjavihāri* at the beginning of his career (in 1908) and *Bhūmikannyā Sītā* (Sita, the Daughter of the Earth, 1955) at the end. Music was an important aspect of these days. In P. K. Atre's *Prītisaṅgam* (Joined in Love, 1968) also music was the major factor. Between 1930 and 1950 the earlier musical plays continued to be staged, and they attracted a large audience. Hirabai Badodekar, Meenakshi, Jayamala Shiledar and Chhota Gandharva were popular as singers—not as singer-actors. After 1950 the tradition of writing *Sangīt Nāṭak* was revived. Viddyadhar Gokhale's *Suvarṇa-Tulā* (The Golden Scale, 1960), *Paṇḍitrāj Jagannāth* (1960), *Mandārmāla* (1963); Vasant Kanetkar's *Matsyagandha* (1964) and Purushottam Darvhekar's *Kaṭyār Kāḷajāt Ghusali* (The Dagger Pierced the Heart, 1967) are popular *Sangīt* plays that have featured singers like Prasad Savkar, Kirti Shiledar, Vasantrao Deshpande, Faiyaz and others.

The Middle-Class Tone. The dominant group among the popular plays is of those that deal with middle-class themes, or themes that appeal to the middle-class sensibility. They have a story element, a hero and a heroine, a typical middle-class attitude, a wise character that mouths the dramatist's pseudo-philosophy, a moderately sad—not necessarily tragic—ending or a romantic happy ending, a plot full of accidents and coincidences. The dramatists make desperate attempts to hide their shallowness and to create an impression that the plays convey something deep and serious. There are two types of dramatists in this group. The first type once had some literary merit but later degenerated into popular playwriting. The second type started with popular playwriting and stayed there. In the first type, we have Vasant Kanetkar with plays such as *Malā Kāhi Sāṅgāycay* (I Want to Say Something, 1970) and *Aśrunci Jhāli Phule* (Tears Turned Flowers, 1966); Vijay Tendulkar with his plays such as *Pāhije Jātice* (It Takes the Real McCoy, 1977); C. T. Khanolkar with his plays such as *Rakheli* (The Kept-Woman, 1974); and Madhukar Toradmal with his *Tarun Turka Mhātāre Arka* (The Young Turks and the Old Rascals, 1973). In the second type, we have Madhusudan Kalelkar's (b. 1924) plays such as *Cāndane Śimpit Jāśi* (Trail of Moonlight, 1973), *Diwā Jaḷu De Sāri Rāt* (Let the Lamp Burn All Night, 1965), *Aprādh Mie Kelā* (I am the Guilty One, 1961), *He Phul Candanāce* (This Flower of the Sandalwood Tree, 1969) and Bal Kolhatkar's plays such as *Duritānce Timit Jāvo* (Let the Darkness of Sins Disappear, 1957) and *Vāhato Hi Durvānci Juḍi* (1964). S. N. Pendse (b. 1913) is a successful regional novelist with genuine literary merit. He turned his novels such as *Gārambicā Bāpu* (1965) into plays. These plays were a popular success but artistically they are not very satisfying. They provide good evidence in the study of literary genres.

Farces. The last group of popular plays consists of farces and farcical comedies. The farce is a distinct form as far as the performance is concerned; it has no claim to any literary distinction. Vasant Kanetkar's *Premā Tujhā Raṅga Kasā* (Love, What's Thy Colour, 1961) is a well-made comedy. Baban Prabhu and Atmaram Bhende were the main exponents of the Marathi farce. Baban Prabhu's *Jhopi Gelelā Jāgā Jhālā* (One Who Is Asleep Wakes Up, 1958), *Dinucyā Sāsubāi Rādhābāi* (Radhabai, the Mother-in-law of Dinu, 1960) and *Paḷā Paḷā Koṇ Puḍhe Paḷe To* (Run, Run, Let's See Who Comes Out Ahead, 1973) have been popular with the audience. Some of these farces are adaptations from the English.

The New Techniques

Professional companies as well as amateur troupes staged the popular plays mentioned earlier. The Goa Hindu Association, the Mumbai Marathi Sahitya Sangh, Chandralekha, Natya-Sampada, Natya-Mandar, Atre Theatre, Marathi Rangbhumi are some troupes that deserve to be mentioned. The popular drama has brought forth many actors, directors and technicians in the field of light-effects, stage-craft and costume-designing. It has benefited from the film in the sense that it uses some film-techniques in stage-production. Thus the use of the flashback technique, the use of action-freeze, the use of light-and-darkness to mark the boundaries of scenes, the use of background music, are direct borrowings from the film. The technical advances and facilities are freely used not only by the popular drama producers but also by the producers of the highbrow drama. There is hardly any popular drama production that does not use a revolving stage, split levels, spotlights, coloured floodlights, a multicoloured revolving

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spotlight, stereophonic sound devices, recorded voices, sounds and echoes.

P. L. Deshpande. It is the highbrow drama that has made experiments in stage-production and technique of writing and also claims to have achieved literary distinction. It was P. L. Deshpande's (b. 1919) *Tujhe Āhe Tujapāśi* (What You are Looking for Has Been with You all the Time, 1957) that marked the beginning of the new play. The play is a confrontation between two ways of living: the way of suppressing one's instincts by accepting Gandhian asceticism, and the way of enjoying life to its full extent by adopting an aesthetic and aristocratic attitude. The dramatist's sympathy is obviously with the latter in the play, and it has been a remarkable stage success. His *Amaldar* (Officer, 1952), an adaptation of Gogol's *Inspector General*, has also done very well; it hardly betrays its foreign origin.

V. Kanetkar and V. V. Shirwadkar. *Veḍyāca Ghar Unhāt* (The Madman is Housed in the Scorching Sun, 1957) was the first successful attempt of Vasant Kanetkar (b. 1923) at writing a modern drama. Next he wrote, in 1962, *Rāygaḍālā Jevhā Jāg Yete* (When Raygad Wakens). The theme is historical, but the treatment is psychological, in the sense that it presents the mental make-up of Sambhaji, son of Sivaji, in order to give a different colour to some known historical facts. The play is well written except for a touch of sentimentality at the end, which later on Kanetkar developed and exploited in writing popular plays. V. V. Shirwadkar (b. 1912), a successful poet, had often failed as a dramatist for the simple reason that he lacked dramatic technique and failed to catch dramatic moments in writing. His *Naṭasamrāt* (The Prince of Actors, 1971) is a tragedy comparable to Gadkari's *Ekac Pyālā* for its success and achievement. The play deals with the life-story of an actor. The play is written in the style of *King Lear* and as the main character is an actor, Shirwadkar has succeeded in enriching the play by incorporating the powerful soliloquies of Lear and Julius Caesar. Shirwadkar is good in translation, but lacks Shakespeare's poetry and subtlety in characterization. Earlier, he attempted some adaptations, and also a historical play *Dusarā Peśavā*.

Vijay Tendulkar. Vijay Tendulkar (b. 1928) has better abilities as a dramatist. His *Māṇus Nāvāca Beṭ* (An Island Called Man, 1956), *Śāntatā Kort Cālu Āhe* (Silence, The Court is in Session, 1968), *Aśī Pākhare Yeti* (Thus, Birds Come, 1970), *Sakhārām Bāinḍar* (Sakharam, the Binder, 1972) and *Ghāśirām Kotvāl* (Ghashiram, the Kotwal, 1973) have established certain new conventions in modern drama. Perhaps after Deval, Tendulkar is the only dramatist who writes simple, natural, character-revealing dialogues that can reach poetic heights when required. *Aśi Pākhare Yeti*, a play influenced by Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, has an ordinary theme. But for Tendulkar's dialogue, it would have remained a mediocre play. Tendulkar, however, never uses refined dialogues simply for dramatization—a temptation that almost all Marathi playwrights have failed to resist. His dialogues gradually expose his characters. Benare's dialogues in *Śāntatā Kort Cālu Āhe* provide a good example. Tendulkar has used the old technique of soliloquies effectively. His characters have self-justifying speeches. Benare's last monologue in *Śāntatā* and Sakharam's initial monologue in *Sakhārām Bāinḍar* are meant for justification. Tendulkar does not use humour at the cost of characterization. He uses irony of communication, and that of situation. Nana's attempt at consoling Ghashiram in *Ghāśirām Kotvāl* and the last act of *Śāntatā*, are examples of the effective use of irony.

The isolation of the individual and his confrontation with the hostile surroundings is Tendulkar's favourite theme; indeed he has hardly any other. It is the character that fascinates him. He depicts the broken dreams of the character as in *Mi Jinkalo Mi Haralo* (I Won, I Lost, 1963), the tremendous social pressure that leads to suppression as in *Śāntatā* and the ruthless social forces or traditions that are beyond the control of an individual and that isolate him as in *Ghāśirām* and *Sakhārām*. But this shows a conceptual limitation as well. In *Ghāśirām* he tried to depict the character as a monstrous creation of a society which is ruthlessly destroyed by its creator the moment it tries to menace and dominate. But Ghashiram does not appear to be a monstrous creation of society, because Tendulkar has lost his sense of balance in depicting other characters such as Nana. It is only when he gets a character full of complex potentialities that he succeeds in writing a powerful play. This has happened in *Sakhārām*. But in order to go beyond depicting the personal tragedies of individuals, a dramatist needs an outlook on life. Tendulkar is devoid of that. The failure of *Ghāśirām*—which is unique in its presentation as it revives the old forms such as the *bhajan*, the *lalit* and the *bhāruḍ*, depends on team-work, and uses music and dance effectively—after *Sakhārām* is both revealing and disturbing.

C. T. Khanolkar. C. T. Khanolkar (1930–76), a poet and novelist, wrote a few good plays. His *Ek Śūnnya Bājirāv* (Bajirao the Cipher, 1966) is the first original Marathi play that expresses the self-devouring feeling of life's futility and absurdity which is dominant in modern European drama. His *Ajab Nyāya Vartulācā* (1973) is an adaptation of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. His *Avadhya* (The Indestructible, 1971) caused a sensation and protest by its stage-production. The play shows the two attitudes of a poet, Gangadhar: the cynical, detached, cold attitude and the sensitive, aesthetic attitude that loves and believes in life. Ultimately the play fails because the two attitudes are crudely identified with the evil and the good, and Gangadhar's character

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ceases to grow. His *Kālāya Tasmei Namha* (My Homage to Time, 1972) has a suprarational theme—a fortune-teller's foretelling ironically becomes true in spite of the attempts of the characters to avoid it. Khanolkar's poetry and novels also show a sense of mysticism, the inevitability of fate, and forces—physical and metaphysical —that are beyond human comprehension. Khanolkar remains a poet—one of rare gifts—in his plays, in the sense that he does not systematize his vision, nor does he rationalize the elusive and mythical aspects of life. His plays are fascinating for their flashes of poetry.

The Experimental Theatre

Highbrow plays were staged both by professional as well as amateur troupes. But one must give credit to amateur troupes like Rangayan, Progressive Dramatic Association, Kalopasak, Theatre Unit, Theatre Academy, Abhivyakti, Avishkar and others for introducing modern drama to the Marathi audience. These troupes have brought forth directors like Bhalba Kelkar, Vijaya Mehta, Jabbar Patel, Arvind Deshpande, and actors like Dr. Shreeram Lagu and Amol Palekar. In Bombay the experimental theatre stages a few original plays as well as translations from English, German, French, Bengali, Hindi and Kannada: as those of Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad, Badal Sarkar, for example. This activity is limited however, to a meagre number of playgoers for various reasons, such as the alien spirit of the plays, or the snobbery attached to the experimental theatre. The Government of Maharashtra and the Marathi playgoers have a generous attitude towards dramatic activity. Theatrical art has not only got social approval it has a social prestige as well.

The love of drama has been a characteristic of the Marathi middle class. Plays are produced even at various village festivals and fairs. In schools and colleges drama has always remained a popular activity. For example, in Poona, one-act play competitions are organized at the college level every year and the number of entries has been increasing. The amateur troupes use competitions for finding promising actors and directors. Play-houses have been built even in small towns in recent years. The State Government has been organizing annual festivals of plays since 1955. This has given rise to many amateur troupes (there are about two hundred entries every year) and encouraged and helped talented actors. directors and playwrights. In industrial cities like Bombay, drama festivals are organized for industrial workers. Some private industries organize their own festivals.

The history of Marathi drama shows that there were and are a few good dramatists but it has still to wait for a genius in playwriting.

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Oriya

SITAKANT MAHAPATRA

The year 1977 saw the centenary celebration of the Oriya drama *Bābājī* by Jagmohan Lala. After prolonged debate for about a decade scholars are now generally agreed that *Bābājī* should be given the credit of being the first Oriya drama. Before its publication in 1877 there had been three other plays or writings resembling a modern play. But it is difficult to distinguish them from contemporary epic-stories and narrative prose. These three works are *Parasurām Vijaya* (Victory of Parasuram) of Purushottam Deb in the 15th century, *Jagannāth Ballav* of Ray Ramananda Patnaik in the 16th century and *Gopināth Ballav* written in 1868 by Raghunath Pariccha. The literary journal *Sambāḍa Bahikā* in its issue dated 1 December 1877 held the play *Bābājī* as the first Oriya play and offered it to the readers like 'the first fruit in the household garden'. The emergence of this play has to be seen in its socio-cultural context to appreciate its origin and its impact.

The Early Plays

The last three decades of the 19th century saw significant changes in Oriya society, economics, language and culture. It was during this time that after years of neglect and silence, a new renaissance was in evidence. Literary journals and printing presses had come into being. The play *Bābājī* was part of this emerging cultural renaissance. The other aspects of this new movement were the poetic works of Radhanath Ray, the stories of Fakir Mohan and the critical awareness created by the opposing schools of thought projected through two journals *Bijuli* and *Indradhanu*. Orissa had a rich and living tradition of the rural and folk theatres through its history, and variously described as *Līla*, *Rāsa*, *Gotipua* (a dance prevalent in southern Orissa with usually two persons dancing and singing), *Pālā* (a traditional performing art with two or more members in stylized dress narrating a story) and so on. The modern play with its dialogue, characters and designed development of story through different 'Acts' was not a part of these traditional repertoire of folk entertainment. In some of these forms, as for example in *pālā*, the limited number of performers (which rarely exceeded 3 or 4 persons) come on the stage, continue their performance and never leave it until the end. Besides, they would go on narrating a story which was interspersed with similar episodes and ancillary themes. They were more anecdotal and episodic in character and more often than not, revealed scant regard for organization of the theme. Impromptu additions or alterations were also possible and the repertoire had a liberal sprinkling of Sanskrit *kāvyas* and rhetorics. Jagmohan Lala had come in contact with Bengali and English literature and the folk opera and *jātrā* tradition in Oriya and modern Bengali. In 1867 the Bengali dramatist Dinabandhu Mitra had composed a social drama *Līlābati*. In that play Dinabandhu Mitra represented the new ideas of social reform and painted the degeneration of the erstwhile aristocracy nurtured by Britain's patronage and given to drinking and debauchery. As the first play in Oriya language, *Bābājī* no doubt had several inadequacies. It was Jagmohan Lala's very first play. As a playwright Lala had very little experience of the stage and audience-sense. The play also reveals an inadequate ability to organize the theme so as to retain an element of suspense or surprise and logical development of the theme. *Bābājī* could not be very much stage-worthy in spite of its emphasis on social reform which could be taken as a contemporary theme. The play also became didactic and was devoid of the deeper sensibility of higher literary creation. This is why some scholars give the credit of the first Oriya drama to *Kāñci Kāveri* (1880) of Ramshankar, even though chronologically *Bābājī* was the first play. *Kāñci Kāveri* does not have the strength of theme of *Bābājī*. It has more humour, rhetorics and pageantry. Unlike *Bābājī* it incorporates songs based on Orissi *rāgās* and *rāginis*. Looking back on it today, *Kāñci Kāveri*'s humour would appear crude, its development of theme devoid of skill and its dialogue tiresome. But because of its stage-worthiness, the presence of some five songs and its delineation of a more concrete theme, it proved more successful on the stage than *Bābājī*. *Kāñci Kāveri* was in fact modelled on the Sanskrit theories of drama. The theme was historical-political and was based upon Purushottam Dev's invasion of Kanchi. It was a theme in which the historical event of royal invasion and an intimate love story which has passed into mythology were brought together but not very artistically or creatively.

The beginning of Oriya drama derived equally from an awareness of western play writing and stage-craft and the *jātrā* or the folk-opera tradition of Orissa. The plays written in the last three decades of the 19th century reveal both these influences. The preponderance of music in *Kāñci Kāveri* and the dialogue, couched mostly in poetic form are clear pointers to the Oriya *jātrā* tradition in the initial development of Oriya drama. Today, if one looks at the dialogues of *Kāñci Kāveri* and particularly at those of Padmāvati, the heroine, and her friend Bhadra, the expressions used by

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them may appear unnatural. But to the Oriya audience, acquainted with the operatic traditions, this was not at all incongruous. Similarly the emphasis on puranic characters and the supernatural events in the oral plays are also traceable to the impact of the *jātrā*. Ten years after *Bābājī*, Jagmohan Lala published his second play *Sati* (The Virgin, 1887). The play was based on the exploitation and debauchery of the ruler of an ex-state, and was very popular.

An important point to be noted in this connection is the establishment of a stage in 1885 by the Mahanta of Kotpada, Daitari Raghunath; this stage continued for at least 40 years and was responsible for the presentation of Oriya plays on a more or less regular and steady basis.

Another popular play of this period was *Sītā Bibāha* (Marriage of Sita, 1899) by Kampal Misra (Kāmpāḷa Miśra, 1875–1927). This was based upon a puranic theme depicting the childhood and early youth of Sri Ramachandra and his marriage to Sita. In his preface to this play Abhiram Bhanja referred to certain 'major problems' in the development of Oriya drama. According to him the 'lack of development' in Oriya drama and stage was the absence of appreciation for it among the general public. He also referred to the absence of a permanent stage where the plays could be presented. This was not quite correct because the stage at Kotpada was, as mentioned earlier, presenting Oriya plays regularly. Even though *Sitā Bibāha* was popular, it was composed in the style of Sanskrit drama. As a matter of fact, right up to 1920 puranic, historical and imaginative themes dominated Oriya playwriting. The two other playwrights of this period who deserve mention are Bhikari Charan Patnaik (Bhikārīcaraṇa Paṭṭanāyaka, 1877–1962) and Aswini Kumar Ghose (Aśvinīkumāra Ghoṣa, 1892–1962). Bhikari Charan's *Kaṭṭak Vijaya* (1901) was a modernized presentation in the style of *Kāñci Kāveri*. *Kaṭṭak Vijaya*, however, marked a step in the release of Oriya playwriting from the clutches of puranic themes presented against the background of simulated physical settings. In this play he used a legend. But in its presentation the emphasis was on reproduction of physical reality as, for example, the attempt to present the crossing of the Chilka lake by the soldiers. Aswini Kumar Ghose's *Konārka* (1927) was a remarkable play of this period for more than one reason. The play made a beautiful presentation of the mental conflict of Bisu Maharana, the architect who as the head of the group was responsible for the construction of the Konarka temple and has failed to complete the temple in its final stages. Bisu Maharana had to agree to sacrifice his son Dharma who had come to visit him. Dharma was born in his village when Bisu was away as the head architect on a royal decree for construction of the Konarka temple. The play *Konārka* bristles with rhetoric and emotionalism. But Aswini Babu brought in the innovation of free-verse pattern into the play and that was nearer to the present pattern of the prose-language in modern plays. He produced a very large number of plays but of them only *Konārka* was of any real significance. Mention may also be made of two other plays written by him: the puranic play *Bhīṣma* (1915) and the historical play *Sheoji* (1918), and of the two plays of Pandit Godavarish Mishra (Godābarīśa Miśra, 1886–1956) who was more well-known for his poetry. The two plays were *Mukunda Deva* and *Puruṣottam Deva*. The earlier was a fairly well-written play. Both the plays were based upon a happy blending of history and legend, but cannot be described as successful plays. The dialogues were also often unnecessarily verbose and the plays showed a lack of awareness of audience response and the stage.

Summing up, in this period up to 1920 puranic and mythological themes predominated, and social plays in the modern sense were practically unknown, the dialogues were often in the poetic form and songs had a very important place. Realistic portrayal or characterization was at a low level of development. Man as a social being with his myriad social relationships and their complications was not yet a relevant theme for drama. The main purpose was social entertainment which no doubt continues to enjoy legitimacy, but more sophisticated objectives, both literary and philosophical, have been added on later. But considered as literature, plays of this period never came to the level that was attained in poetry or fiction. Often there was a preponderance of the element of farce. There was hardly any reflection of the contemporary problems of society and even when these were sought to be delineated as in *Bābājī* or *Sati*, the treatment tended to be rhetorical and dogmatic and not artistically autonomous or significant.

Folk-Plays or the Jātra Tradition

Running parallel to this development, one could see the continuing popularity of the folk forms of theatre such as *rāsa*, *jātrā*, *pālā*, *suānga* (a traditional performance by a small group quaintly dressed; the presentation is humorous, ribald and occasionally erotic), etc. The emphasis in these forms was not on the written words and hence not on its literary content or form but on excellence in presentation. *Jātrā* has a very old tradition in Orissa. In its present form it is at least as old as the 16th century. Themes from the Oriya Ramayana and Mahabharata provided the main repertoire for *jātrā*. Different fairs and festivals were the occasions when the *jātrās* were performed. Traditional forms of dances and songs such as *doli gīta* (swing songs), songs relating to *sabara-saburuni* (rural pantomime with two persons, male and female singing and dancing; Sabara, an important tribe in Orissa, has become a generic word for tribals) or *kelā-keluni* (kelas are nomadic snake charmers) presenting rural pantomimes with singing as the main item supported by simple body movements), *dhudki* (a stringed instrument used by wandering minstrels) and *chaitiyā*

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(rural pantomime; bamboo horses, colourfully dressed are made to dance by the men inside it; interesting songs accompany this dance) were also linked to the *jātrā* tradition as also the Ramaleela and Krushnaleela forms. The traditional *jātrā* emphasized colourful costuming, crude humour and popular songs. Based on popular themes taken from the epics and liberally using popular tunes in a large number of songs they tried to entertain the rural public. Acting was secondary and the capacity to render songs in a mellifluous voice was the primary qualification to be a successful performer. The green room was often far away and the characters were introduced on the stage to the audience through a device of poetic composition. Baisnab Pani brought about certain changes in the concept of *jātrā* by systematizing its form, breaking up the theme into several parts to be called acts and scenes. Besides, *naṭas*, *naṭis* and *sūtradhāra* concepts were also introduced. *Suānga* was very much akin to the *jātrā* and its main purpose was to entertain. The *jātrā* tradition continues to grow and even today there are several touring *jātrā* parties whose performances are immensely popular. They perform not merely in the rural areas but also in the cities. The *daskathia* tradition was also another form of rural performing arts. The themes of *daskathia* were mainly derived from epics. Even social matters have been taken up under this form in recent times.

The most prominent among the writers of *jātrā* was Baisnab Pani (Baiṣṇaba Pāṇi, 1882–1956). His entire life was a virtual negation and revolt against prevailing social values and ideas of morality. In his plays the humour is sometimes crude, yet the strong rural flavour of the dialogue, music and the portrayal of the life-style of the common man and patterns of social living more than make up for any lack of organization or literary excellence. More than 100 dance-dramas which he composed are a testimony to the popularity of *jātrā* as a form of folk entertainment and literature. Bala Krushna Mohanty (Bālakṛṣṇa Mahānti, 1900–50), a contemporary of Pani, was equally great as a folk playwright. His plays were somewhat better in organization and artistic delineation even though they were not as popular as those of Baisnab Pani. Together, the dance-dramas of these two form an important aspect of the continuing and living *jātrā* tradition of Orissa. One could also mention the directors or writers of *rāsa* plays like Govind Das, Mohan Goswami, Baisnav Charan Das and Gopal Das in this connection.

Multifaceted Development: 1920–47

Oriya drama took a significant turn after 1920 and between 1920 and 1947 it registered its major developments in form, style and theme. Multifaceted developments took place in all aspects of playwriting and presentation on the stage. The guiding spirit of Oriya drama in this period is Kabichandra Kali Charan Patnaik (Kabicandra Kāḷī Caraṇa Paṭṭanāyaka, 1900–78), a playwright, actor and director, a musician and musicologist of eminence. Kali Charan was a great talent in the field of ancient Oriya songs and *bhajans*. He was well-versed in the *rāgās* and *rāgiṇis* and gave a new form to the classical pattern of Orissi songs. Kali Charan is almost a household word in Orissa and perhaps the most popular name in the field of drama. By 1939 he had brought into being the Orissa Theatres and tried to impart a measure of respectability and professionalism to Oriya play not merely as literature but also as the most important form of entertainment in both rural and urban societies. It was he who first introduced ladies on the stage in Orissa theatre. Prior to this, men used to act as ladies. He had an eye for talent and such stalwarts and well-known artistes like Babi (Samuel Sahu), Durlava, Pira (Priyanath Misra) and Laxmi were introduced by him through Orissa Theatres. Kali Charan was thus a great innovator in the field of Oriya drama. It was he who emphasized the importance of the conversational style in dialogue. His eminence in the field of music also helped him compose music for most of his plays. In his early youth he had been deeply interested in the *rāsa* and *līlā* traditions and performances. But by late 1930 he was fully in the field of social plays. His play *Bhāta* (Rice, 1945) written in the background of the Second World War, the hunger years and the social degeneration, was a great success. The hunger march of the people in the play was an unforgettable sequence and a very important step in the direction of the increasing social awareness and social commitment of modern Oriya play. His play *Abhijān* (The Expedition, 1946) was based on the same theme as Ram Shankar's *Kāñci Kaveri* and Godavarish Mishra's *Puruṣottam Dev*. *Faṭā Bhuin* (The Broken Earth, 1949) and *Rakta Māṭi* (The Blood Earth, 1947) were two other plays delicately blending social concerns with artistic integrity. In Ram Shankar's *Kāñci Kaveri*, Purushottam Dev was a devotee of Lord Jagannath. The emphasis was on bhakti. In Godavarish, the emphasis was on Purushottam as a great warrior in history. In Kali Charan's play Purushottam is portrayed as a lover. But the social background in which the play unfolded brought out very little of the contemporary social milieu and the treatment was historical rather than social. The tradition created by Kali Charan was continued by three important playwrights all very popular names in the field of modern Oriya plays each having a speciality of his own. They are, Gopal Chhotray (b. 1918), Ramachandra Misra (b. 1921) and Bhanjakishore Patnaik (b. 1922). Ramachandra Misra is perhaps the most popular of the three. Like Kali Charan he was very much attracted to songs in his plays. He did approach social problems from various perspectives. But his conclusions were generally determined in terms of his idealism. This idealism incorporated traditional values of family relationships and the importance of community living. These traditional social values are sought to be upheld in

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his popular plays like *Bhai Bhāuja* (The Brother and Sister-in-Law, 1952) where he rejects the infiltration of western culture and the distortion it brings about. His plays *Mūliā* (The Wage-earner, 1952) and *Ghara Saṁsār* (Household, 1950) are realistic portrayals of rural middle-class life. The latter was immensely popular and had a record-breaking run on the stage. In a later production, *Norottama Dās Kahe* (Norottam Das Speaks, 1969), he broke new ground both from the point of view of stage-craft and characterization. The protagonist Das is the helpless Everyman in society, a silent spectator of the corruption and social degeneration that characterize our times. There are only two acts in the play and these are enacted on the stage in two rooms only.

Gopal Chhotray will be remembered as the creator of the successful and memorable dialogue. Apart from writing original full-length plays and one-acts, he has also given dramatic form to many important novels. *Bharasa* (The Shelter, 1952) and *Para Kalama* (The Feather Pen, 1954) are two of his best plays. *Para Kalama* was based upon a political theme and was handled effectively without allowing it to degenerate into rhetorics or polemical outbursts. Gradually Chhotray turned more towards one-act plays and dance-dramas. Bhanja Kishore Patnaik's forte consisted in weaving charming stories that would keep the attention of the audience in their complex net. From the point of view of literature his plays are somewhat superficial. But he had a very powerful and uncanny stage-sense and an awareness of what the middle-class audience, who were mostly the theatre-goers, wanted from a play.

Kali Charan and these three dramatists who were more or less in his line dominated the stage for nearly 25 to 30 years right up to 1950. The Orissa Theatres which Kabichandra Kali Charan had created had collapsed in the meantime and two important theatres for regular presentation of Oriya plays sprang up at Cuttack. They are 'Annapurna Theatre' and 'Janata Theatre'. It is due to these two theatres that regular presentation of plays became possible at Cuttack, the heart of Oriya literature and culture. Plays were in demand and a very healthy and symbiotic relationship developed between the three playwrights mentioned above and the character-actors in these two theatres. This was mutually beneficial and led to the growth of Oriya drama on sound professional lines.

Drama after Independence

The period since 1950 has been dominated by four playwrights. They are Manoranjan Das (Manōrañjan Dāsa, b. 1923), Pranabandhu Kar (Prāṇabandhu Kar), Biswajit Das (Biśvajit Dāsa, b. 1936) and Bijaya Kumar Misra (Bijaya Kumār Miśra, b. 1936). Of them, Manoranjan is the most significant and successful. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his play *Āraṇya Fasala* (The Wild Harvest, 1970). His is the most important voice in the field of the new drama in Oriya, and has travelled a long way since his historical play *Buxi Jagabandhu* (1951) or the political-psychological play *Āgāmi* (The Coming, 1950). He began traditionally but soon discovered its inadequacies. *Buxi Jagabandhu* was no doubt a historical play but here a somewhat different treatment was given to the historical theme.

The early sixties saw the gradual decline of the professional stage. There were several reasons for this. The cinema was making its slow but steady inroads with its emphasis on slick and technically competent commercials and successful visuals. Theatre-goers of the older generation were declining in numbers and the younger generation were all for films. Theatre faced evil days. Gone were the halcyon days of its popularity and the close collaboration between dramatists, actors and stage-managers. New amateur groups were coming up to take up bold experimental themes. A new approach to stage-craft was clearly in evidence.

Manoranjan Das. Manoranjan's *Āgāmi* was perhaps the most important step in the direction of discarding the need for traditional stage-craft. His plays also did not lean heavily on professional actors. Oriya drama was not merely moving in the direction of greater appreciation of social conflicts, the confrontation of values and the emergence of the lonely individual, but it was now becoming linked to the international literary and dramatic scene.

The four playwrights referred to above are sincere and conscious playwrights and are in touch with the developments in the field of new drama in the West. Uninformed critics who have a temptation to follow western critical categories and apply them indiscriminately have tried to bring them into the fold of the Theatre of the Absurd. Incoherence in dialogue or the broken gestalt and vision of the protagonist do not always define or describe an absurd drama. In particular, Manoranjan has suffered from this kind of labelling as an Absurd dramatist. This is primarily because of the greater role of ideas or themes in his plays. It is sometimes not realized that he also finds the relevance of tradition and in his later plays like *Kathā Ghodā* (The Wooden Horse, 1974), he has tried to adopt in certain sequences the motif of folk-play and folk themes.

It is Manoranjan Das who has continued to write plays in various forms and styles and has travelled a long way from *Āgāmi* and *Buxi Jagabandhu* to *Kathā Ghodā* and *Śabdalipi* (The Word Script, 1976). The complexities of the inner life of man and its artistic delineation find a heightened sense of creativity in Manoranjan. He is equally at ease in small plays or one-act plays and the larger plays. *Mahā Samudra* (1967) which is a collection of some small plays and one-acts reveal one aspect of Manoranjan's excellence as a playwright: to delineate strange complexities

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of character and its psychic levels in a small and limited framework. The obsession is about psychological delineation of a new approach to the awareness of time and its appreciation through the human psyche. Among his more well known plays are *Banahansi* (The Wild Swan, 1969), *Āraṇya Fasala*, *Kathā Ghoda* and *Śabdalipi*. *Āraṇya Fasala* was a clear departure from the traditions of Kali Charan or Gopal Chhotray. In his own preface to the first edition of the play the author referred to the 'disjointed and fragmented life of modern man who had lost all sense of coherence and meaning'. The agony of the protagonist which is also the agony of the age was barely communicable in the traditional language. The dialogue in *Āraṇya Fasala* is incoherent and cryptic and symbolises the disjointed character of modern life itself. The dramatic art of Manoranjan reveals not merely his awareness of the development of drama in the West but also an intelligent response to the cultural crisis in our own country. *Āraṇya Fasala* has recently been published in English translation by Oxford University Press. The following extensive extract from the preface by B. Das to this English translation brings out beautifully the essence of Manoranjan as a dramatist:

'*Āraṇya Fasala* is not an absurd play like the plays of Beckett, Ionesco and Adamov. What Das is primarily concerned with here is the insincere, fleeting, sensational and escapist trends in the character of modern man. Such a concern is characteristic of him in plays like *Banahansi* (The Wild Swan) and *Śabdalipi* (The Word Script) where he has exhibited the same concern although with different and more advanced techniques. The four main characters—Subrat, Sangram, Baby and Lily—are representative of the urban, rootless life of the modern age. Subrat resembles Prufrock in not having the courage to perform an act of daring during his first visit to the dak bungalow with Baby and his accidental meeting with Lily there. Sangram, on the other hand, lives in a make-believe world and hence does not have the stature of a tragic character. The end, therefore, is necessarily melodrama in spite of the ironical killing of a goat. Tragedy, we are told, originated in such killing or sacrifice. Verma, however, is a contrast to the other characters. He lacks refinement, lies glibly about himself and has a passion for hunting. The Chowkidar is the only character drawn from ordinary life, a simple rustic who provides an element of relief in the dramatic action. The presence of such a character is ample evidence of the presence of a positive view of life in contrast to the actions performed by the main characters whose disorientation from life makes love and personal relationships a meaningless pastime—the picnic is the symbol of that attitude.'

Manoranjan's play creates a world in which continuing loyalties to traditional categories of themes and values suddenly appear meaningless and irrelevant leading to mental agony. It is a complex combination of mental conflicts, illusions and the quest for happiness and meaning and failure to achieve them. It may be relevant to point out here that Manoranjan has also brought about significant changes in the traditional idea of sequence, continuity of theme and the flow and mechanism of dialogue. Explaining his view on dramatic style, Manoranjan has said in his preface to *Banahansi* that 'to convey the complex and subtle state of mind in this play, I have adopted the concept of the timelessness of time. All the past, present and future converge there on a straight line. And the main characters stand on that straight line and cry out in agony for peace and happiness in life.' In *Kathā Ghodā*, Manoranjan beautifully delineates the human destiny of drab routine and its soul-killing drudgery. If *Āraṇya Fasala* unravels the hypocrisy of modern urban living and suppressed sex with each character trying to exist like an island, *Kathā Ghodā* seeks to create a new world of dehumanized routine. In *Śabdalipi*, Manoranjan has used the idea of the impossibility of communication in the complexities of routine modern social setting.

Pranabandhu Kar. Pranabandhu Kar's *Aśānta* (Unquiet, 1960) was an experimental but powerful play. *Aśānta* was more a one-act play than a full-fledged one. It has a remarkable unity of design and execution. A lamppost and a room adjoining the lamppost, the light from the lamppost filtering into the room and around these two the characters who are hoodlums, the scum of society—out of these Pranabandhu built up a poignantly sensitive play. The quest of the protagonist Subhendu in the midst of the hypocrisy of 'sociableness' was indeed one of the most powerful portrayals in modern Oriya drama. Pranabandhu Kar, however, has devoted himself more and more to one-act plays.

Bijaya Kumar Mishra. Bijaya Kumar Mishra turned his attention to drama fairly early. After traditional but well-worked plays like *Aśānta Graha* (Unquiet Planet, 1964), *Timira Tirtha* (The Pilgrim Centre of Darkness, 1965), *Asatya Śahara* (The Unreal City, 1967), his best came in 1968 with the presentation of *Sababāhaka Mane* (The Pall-bearers). It is a moving play. One rainy evening, the protagonists gather in a dilapidated house. They have all lost their way. Darkness and danger from the raging storm bring them together. The quest is escape from this darkness into some measure of light. Confined in that dilapidated house they try to search for food. One of the characters finds a sign to a place where hidden property is supposedly stored. All the protagonists desperately try to outwit each other to win this imagined property. In their final struggle, they find the box hidden underground. But the box is empty except for a note with a request 'put me in a grave here'. That was the final request of the dead person. The portrayal is realistic and the theme brings out very effect-

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ively the crisis of modern man who is obsessed with his creature-comforts with scant regard for the higher values and deeper sensibilities of living. *Duiti Sūrya Dagdha Fulaku nei* (Take Two Sunburnt Flowers) is another successful symbolic play of Bijaya Kumar Mishra where he takes two young characters and examines the manner in which their sensibilities are shrivelled, in the cruel summer of modern living. Two characters on the stage for one and half hours is a difficult presentation. 'Uttara Purusha' an amateur group presented this difficult play with a fair degree of success. In the seventies his play *Tata Nirañjana* (The Banks of Niranjana, 1980) which presents a new view of the Buddha and his renunciation of the world of suffering and illusion, won all-India recognition.

Biswajit Das. Biswajit Das is another sensitive and powerful playwright of this new movement in Oriya drama. He was inspired by his father's passion for drama and began writing since his student days in Ravenshaw College in the early fifties. Some of his one-act plays were presented at the Youth Festivals in Delhi between 1954 and 1956, and later in the Orissa Drama Competition held in 1957, his play *Banhi* (Conflagration, 1957) was adjudged the best. Some of his more well-known plays are the *Niśipadma* (Lotus of the Night, 1972), *Nija Pratinidhinkatharu* (From One's Own Representative), *Nalipan Rāṇi Kalapan Tikka* (Queen of Hearts and Ace of Spade), *Suna Sujane* (Hear O Wisemen) and *Mṛugayā* (The Hunt, 1974). In his plays he reveals a deep understanding of the contemporary crisis in values and man's unenviable position in his search for meaning and significance. Biswajit has distinguished himself both as a creative artist and also as a director of plays. *Mṛugayā* is one of the finest plays in the field of modern Oriya drama. It was presented by the amateur group 'Sanketa' for the first time in June 1970 and thereafter has been successful wherever it was staged. The dialogue in *Mṛugayā* is simple and poignant. It shimmers with the tragic sense of the protagonists' search for peace and happiness. The ill-paid schoolteacher and widower Bibekananda, his son and daughter Sarathi and Mukta, Subhendu, the boy he has adopted and helped educate and who spurns Mukta's love and marries elsewhere for money and power—all of them are seeking peace and happiness in their own way and each one of them is the victim of a cruel destiny that kills their dreams. Mukta is a joyful girl whose dreams of a simple household and peaceful married life gradually recede. Subhendu marries elsewhere even though he is attached to Mukta. Mukta the dreamer marries the shopkeeper Kalpataru who cares little for dreams. Sarathi symbolizes modern youth bent on finding a place in the sun. The idealist teacher compromises himself ultimately before his ex-student Ranjan who has acquired prestige in society. Each character is like a pendulum swinging between his or her true authenticity, his innermost desire to find peace and tranquility, and the distortions of personality brought about by the demands of life and society. The theme of *Mṛugayā* is the endlessness and futility of the hunt for significance and love. Mukta's dream of the sky and the sea remains a dream; the teacher leaves behind his dreamland of simple living based on idealism. *Mṛugayā* is a moving play on the stage. It also used sophisticated methods of lighting and choreographic techniques in the presentation of the play. It brought out the tremendous gap between our dreams and the harsh reality of life in an intense lyrical manner and this was achieved through symbolic dialogue. *Niśipadma* was another successful play of Das. It tried to delineate the common factor of hunger and deprivation in the human psyche before which artificial questions of status, class and education did not really matter. Das has a very fine sense of the stage and he succeeds in tying up the theme with the physical sequences on the stage in an intimate manner.

Later Experimentalists

There is a new generation of dramatists who deserve to be mentioned for their experimental approach to playwriting. They are Kartik Chandra Rath (Kārtik Candra Ratha, b. 1949), Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi (Rameś Prasāda Pāṇigrāhī, b. 1943), Jagannath Prasad Das (Jagannātha Prasāda Dāsa, b. 1936), Harihar Mishra (Harihara Miśra, b. 1940) and Ratnakar Chaini (Ratnākar Chaini, b. 1945). In *Svargadvār* (The Heavenly Gate, 1972), Kartik Chandra Rath adopted a satirical mode to depict the meaninglessness of modern man's life. He took two characters who have committed suicide by drowning in the sea. They look back on their past which emerges before the audience through shadows and echoes of dialogues. The play handled an ambitious theme but in its presentation there were certain technical difficulties. Rath has also written a number of other plays and is tirelessly experimenting with new themes and styles. Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi is another dramatist who holds promise for the future. His play *Mu Ambhe O Ambhemane* (I, We and All of Us, 1970) broke new ground by its innovative pattern of characterization and dialogue. The play is symbolic and does not get entangled in intellectual celebration. It is a satire on the overriding emphasis on the ego of modern man. The scene is a bus stand which connects the characters who oscillate between the desire for ultimate simplicity and the inevitability of complex deceit. After this play Panigrahi has also written two other significant plays, namely, *Dhrutarāṣṭrara Akhhi* (The Eye of Dhrutarashtra) and *Jane Mahāpuruṣaṅka Janma O Mṛutyu Samparkare* (Concerning a Great Man's Birth and Death, 1971). Ratnakar Chaini has written a number of experimental plays. Among his more well-known plays are *Rajahansa* (The Royal Swan, 1969) and *Punaschha Pruthibi* (The Earth Again, 1972). Chaini is a conscious

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playwright. *Rajahansa* is a psychological play set in a mental asylum. *Punascha Pruthibi* tried to cut across historical time by projecting the characters against a puranic backdrop. The characters are all burnt-out in their private lives and do not find any peace. Hypocrisy rules their lives as in Manoranjan's *Āraṇya Fasala*. *Punascha Pruthibi* has a fairly compact and powerful dialogue and shows Chaini's promise for the future. Jagannath Prasad Das has written two plays which have been very successfully staged. These are *Sūryasta Purbaru* (Before the Sun Set, 1977) and *Sabasesa Loka* (The Last Man). While the former is a very fine study of the creeping sense of inadequacy and boredom and the protagonist's sense of facing a blank wall, the latter play incorporates a sense of social purpose without any recourse to cheap slogan. Das, himself a poet and painter, succeeds in creating fine visual images and a stable dramatic structure. Harihar Mishra, also a fine modern poet, invests his character with a sense of poetic approach to reality. His dialogues are full of lyricism and great charm. *Rātrira Duiti Dena* (The Two Wings of Night, 1978) is one of his mature plays which received the Orissa Sahitya Akademi award.

Mention may also be made in this connection of a number of other playwrights like Jadunath Das Mahapatra, Kamalalochana Mohanty, Byomokesh Tripathi, Basanta Kumar Mahapatra, and others who have composed both long plays and one-act plays with varying degrees of success. The Oriya stage has not achieved the kind of sophistication which has been possible in Maharastra, West Bengal or Tamilnadu but it is also making rapid strides. Various concepts in stage presentation are being tried out by the amateur groups ably helped by imaginative and creative playwrights and directors. The amateur groups have done well and have presented a number of experimental plays. These groups like Sanketa, Uttarapurusha, Sravani, Srujani, Friends' Union, etc. have given a new dimension to Oriya drama by presenting the experimental plays of the new authors.

From *Bābāji* and *Kāñci Kāveri* to *Kathā Ghodā* and *Mṛugayā*, Oriya drama has travelled a long way. New approaches to reality, new patterns of dialogue have emerged and the readers' taste is also gradually getting trained to these new developments. As in other areas of our composite culture this new movement in drama coexists with the immense popularity of *jātrā* and other forms of folk theatre particularly in the rural areas.

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Punjabi

ATAMJIT SINGH

In ancient Indian history, the tradition of drama and dramaturgy had scaled the same high peaks as the other fine arts. Yet Punjabi drama and theatre, when they emerged in the early 20th century, had little organic relationship with the ancient Indian tradition. There has been no worthwhile movement in the Punjab, of the kind which flourished in southern and eastern India, intent on reviving the traditions of ancient Indian theatre. Due to the absence of such a link between contemporary drama and theatre movement in the Punjab on the one hand, and the ancient dramatic traditions of India on the other, contemporary Punjabi drama writing has developed very slowly.

Only the *Rāsdhārīs*, *Naqliās* (mimics) and *Bhandas* provided theatrical entertainment to the common people in the towns and villages of the Punjab. As a result, dramatic activity could not rise above the level of folk entertainment.

In medieval times, the needs of the masses for theatrical entertainment were fulfilled by various village folk performers. The tales of the heroes of the Punjab, such as

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Pūran-Bhagat, Hīr-Rānjha, Sohani-Māhiwāl and Mirzā-Sahibān, were sung by the village bards. *Rāsas*, the enactments of the lives of Shri Krishna and Lord Rama (*Rām Līla*), were performed by the *Rāsdhārīs*. The wit and humour of the *Bhandas* and the *Mirāsīs*, the mimicry, satire and lampooning by the *Naqliās* and *Suāṅgīs*, the singing of ballads by the *Dhādīs* and the acrobatic performances of the *Bāzigars* were some of the other popular Punjabi folk entertainments. Such performances could never develop a serious theatre, though they helped keep alive an interest in histrionics.

During the Middle Ages, Punjabi drama could not flourish owing to lack of peace and stability in the land. The Muslim rulers, who ruled for over a thousand years, looked askance at dancing and singing. Even the Sikh Gurus regarded such entertainment as 'nāṭak chetak' (mundane dramatics) and deemed it an obstruction in the spiritual path. There was also no state patronage and the theatre, as a result, had no incentive for development. Though the word *nāṭak* (play) has been used in such literary works of the medieval Punjab as *Bachitter Nāṭak* by Guru Gobind Singh (1666–1708) and *Hanumān Nāṭak* (1630) by Hriday Ram (18th century), it denotes nothing more than a style of writing. These works were not plays in the true sense of the term and the use of the word *nāṭak* did not make them so.

The Birth of Drama

The western impact in the first quarter of the 20th century was responsible for the development of drama as a Punjabi literary genre. Prior to that, there had been the post-annexation Punjabi writing of the last years of the 19th century. This writing reflected the problems which faced the protagonists of the Singh Sabha movement and the Sikh Revival movement, which were formed to counter Christian propaganda and proselytizing in the Punjab. The original dramas written during this period were mostly in prose. Charan Singh (1853–1908) wrote *Ṣarāb Kaur* (The Lady that Liquor Is), a didactic play voicing ideas of religious and social reforms. Bhai Vir Singh (Bhāi Vīr Siṅgh, 1872–1957) wrote an allegorical play, *Rājā Lakhdātā Siṅgh* (The Millionaire Philanthropist, 1910) at a time when the Punjabis were beginning to doubt the achievements of their ancestors, being fed on a diet of English denouncement of crude and corrupt Sikh rule and assurances of the enlightened rule that would replace it. To counteract this, Vir Singh in his drama tried to portray a Sikh ruler as an ideal character. Likewise, Gurbux Singh Barrister wrote *Mohan Bhaiā* (Mohan Brother, 1912) in which the central theme is the slow moral, financial and social ruin of a rich Sikh landlord who had fallen into bad company and is the victim of evil habits. These plays were read with great enthusiasm and gratitude by the Sikhs, because they reflected the ideals of the social reform movements of the time.

With the passing of this particular phase of life in the Punjab, these dramas lost their appeal and appear to the present reader, rather insipid. Their place is less in literature and more in history. These dramas were either historical or mythological in character and, in one way or another, were committed to social reform. They were influenced by medieval English drama and the romantic style of the ancient Sanskrit drama.

Translations from English and Sanskrit

In the early stages of the development of Punjabi drama, writers attempted to translate some of the English and Sanskrit classics. When English literature was introduced at the university level, Shakespeare became quite popular with Punjabi academics. This popularity was responsible for a number of translations of Shakespeare's plays. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid (1881–1936) translated *Comedy of Errors* as *Bhul Bhulaiān* (1911), Amar Singh translated *Othello* as *Deṣ Daman* and Balwant Singh translated *King Lear* as *Dukhi Rājā*. Narain Singh freely adapted *Othello* as *Lāl Bādṣāh*, while Sewa Singh and Jiwan Singh also translated *Othello* (1911). Balwant Singh adapted *Measure for Measure* as *Satyugī Rājā*. Kalidasa's *Abhijñān Śākuntalam* was translated by Charan Singh in 1898.

Some original plays were also written around this time under the influence of medieval English drama and Sanskrit drama. These include Giani Dit Singh's (1853–1901) *Rājā Prabodh Chandra* (1906) and *Abla Ninda* (1908), and Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid's *Brid Vivāh Duṛdaśā* (The Misery of Late Marriage, 1908). Bawa Budh Singh (Bāwā Bud Siṅgh, 1878–1931), Brij Lal Shastri (Brij Lāl Śāstrī, 1894–1968) and Kirpa Sagar (Kirpā Sāgar, 1875–1939) were others who tried their hand at original playwriting. But they wrote without keeping in view the requirements of the stage. In fact, there did not exist any kind of stage at this time and all that a playwright could expect was to have his plays read by the literate. Social reform, moral uplift and glorification of the past were what inspired these authors to write. *Chander Hari*, *Mundrī Chal* (The Magical Ring) and *Nār Navelī* (The Unique Woman) all by Bawa Budh Singh; *Pūraṇ Nāṭak* (1919), *Partigyā* (The Vow), *Vāsvadattā* (1925) and *Sukanyā* (The Good Lady, 1925) all by Brij Lal Shastri; and *Mahārājā Rañjit Siṅgh* and *Dido Jamnā* both by Kirpa Sagar were all quite successful in achieving the objects of their authors.

These early writers employed techniques from western as well as Sanskrit dramas. They also made use of such elements of Punjabi folk-drama as poetic narration, dramatic verse, *naqals* (mimicry) and *suwāṅgs* (imitations). All these were loosely interwoven in plays in which scenes of village courtyards, markets, streets with glass bangle sellers and crowds of young maidens, the marriages of evil spirits and witches, camps of Nihangs, festivals

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opium-eaters and drunkards, police posts, pathans and pandits were meant to be enacted.

Native Punjabi Plays

Ishwar Chander Nanda. It was Ishwar Chander Nanda (Īśvar Candar Nanda, 1892–1966) who wrote the first successful plays in Punjabi. Nanda came under the influence of Norah Richards (1876–1969), the wife of Prof. Phillip E. Richards, who taught English at Dayal Singh College, Lahore. She had worked as a member of the Shakespearian touring companies in Britain and had much experience of staging Shakespeare. She put this experience into staging *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the college with the students taking part in it. She followed this pioneer effort by staging other Shakespearian plays in English as well as in Urdu. Soon Shakespeare became very popular with the university students of Lahore. Ishwar Chander Nanda was one of the students who took part in Mrs Richards' productions.

It was not long before Mrs Richards realized painfully that Shakespeare in English or in any Indian language could never satisfy the genuine needs of Indian theatre audiences and performers. She was, in any case, against 'European versions of an Indian play and Indianized versions of an English one'. She wanted to stimulate originality in playwriting and theatrical performances and so encouraged the idea of 'Indian plays by Indian authors about India, for the Indian people'.[1] She started organizing competitions for one-act plays on Indian themes, preferably written in Indian languages. Ishwar Chander Nanda entered his Punjabi play *Dulhan* (The Bride) in one competition and won the first prize. *Bebe Rām Bhajni and Jin* won the second prize in another content. These two short plays by Nanda pioneered modern Punjabi drama.

Mrs Richards also had links with the Irish National Theatre founded by W. B. Yeats, Lady Gregory and J. M. Synge. She made every effort to make Punjabi drama follow the lead of Irish drama in achieving a close harmony with the native soil. Nanda, under the influence of Mrs Richards, now began to write on the lines of the western realistic play. He chose contemporary social themes and evolved a folk idiom reminiscent of the Irish peasant drama of Synge.

Nanda's first one-act play was staged in 1914 and his first full-length play, *Subhadra*, was published in 1920. He has written two other full-length plays, *Var Ghar jān Lilly dā Viyāh* (1938) and *Social Circle* (1953) and a Punjabi adaptation of *Merchant of Venice* entitled *Ṣāmu Ṣāh* (1928). Besides these, he wrote over a dozen one-act plays.

In all his works, Nanda wrote about the social problems of his day. In *Subhadra* he deals with the problem of widow remarriage, in *Var Ghar jān Lilly dā Viyāh*, he contrasts love marriage and arranged marriage and in *Social Circle* he portrays the middle-class urban elite who arrange their 'social meets' merely to promote their narrow commercial interests. In his one-act plays, such as *Bebe Rām Bhajni and Jin* (Ghosts), *Mān dā Dipti* (Mother's Deputy) and *Ih Dumne* (These Untouchables), he, by and large, deals with the problems of ignorance, superstition, gambling, corruption and other social evils.

Nanda's plays freed Punjabi drama from religious and mythological tags. He propagated new values through young men and women educated in schools and colleges. The main conflict in most of his plays centres on the gap between two generations of the Punjabi middle class. In every play, the old orthodoxy surrenders to the progressive ideas of the young that have been germinated by western education. In fact, Nanda appears to feel that vital drama could only grow out of the lives of contemporary people and their ideas.

It is to Nanda's credit that while adopting western techniques of drama, he also made full use of the folk theatre tradition of the Punjab, blending the two in a vivid pattern. His picturesque presentation of marriage scenes, religious ceremonies, superstitions, the ignorance of the village-folk, folk-songs, folk-dances, etc., give a very real Punjabi flavour to his plays. In his dialogue, he captures the living language of the people and creates immortal characters out of the common stock. Nanda's plays depict 'on stage, current Punjabi society which seems to pulsate with life. The rustic humour of the village-folk, the sardonic expression of the shahukārs and the gay frolics of the young boys and girls find fulsome expression in his plays. In a sense he was able to establish in Punjab for the first time a true people's theatre.'[2] In the words of Sir Jogindra Singh, 'art and literature are reviving—Nanda is the harbinger of a new movement. His characters live, we can recognize them in every village.'[3]

Nanda greatly influenced the later dramatists who also continued to weave plots based on social themes, using modern western techniques. The path Nanda pioneered was followed by Joshua Fazal-ud-din (1903–73), Harcharan Singh (b. 1914), Sant Singh Sekhon (b. 1908), Balwant Gargi (Balwant Gārgi, b. 1916) and others. With their work, Punjabi theatre grew. All these playwrights were motivated and moulded in their creative endeavours by the western realistic drama and theatre. This was also the theatre of social awareness which articulated 'a pronounced desire for social reform, if not social change'.[4]

Other Notable Playwrights. Joshua Fazal-ud-din wrote two plays, *Pind De Vairi* (Enemies of the Village) and *Hīr Sayal*. The first deals with the problems of peasant life, particularly drinking and litigation; the other dramatizes the romance of Heer and Ranjha and is based on Waris Shah. The playwright is adept at making his characters speak in rustic dialect with a heavy folkloric accent. He

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takes special care to portray the Punjabi atmosphere in its true colours.

Gurbakhsh Singh Preet Lari (Gurbakṣ Siṅgh Prīt Laṛī, 1895–1978), whose major contribution is in prose and in the realm of ideas, wrote a few plays on the theme of love. His *Rāj Kumāri Latikā* (1935) was originally written in English in 1923 for an American dramatic club. Its Punjabi rendering was serialized in the first volume of *Prīt Laṛī* (1933). In this play, the writer gives bold expression to the idea of platonic love and pleads that this kind of love is the norm in western countries. In *Prīt Maṇi* (Jewel of Love, 1933) he attempts to spread through his protagonist, Hridaynath, the ideas of universal love, cooperation and western humanism. In *Prīt Mukuṭ* (The Crown of Love, 1936) he again tries to promote his idea of a new creed based on universal love.

The plays of Gurbakhsh Singh have been designed on the western model, but they are lacking in dramatic effect. His characters, divorced from real life, are the products of his imagination and speak as though they are translating English speech forms into Punjabi. 'The plays, in general, lack dramatic action and are overburdened with borrowed ideas devoid of the flavour of the soil.'[5]

Mohan Singh Dewana (Mohan Siṅgh Diwānā, b. 1899), a prolific writer, was markedly influenced by Ibsen, Shaw and the Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello (1867–1936). Dewana's *Paṅkhṛiān* (The Petals, 1927), a collection of four problem plays, leads the reader into a world of fantasy. In all his plays, the author slips into a world of inward reality. His plays end in a rather inconclusive state and do not make a strong impact.[6]

The realistic approach to drama adopted by Nanda was faithfully followed by Harcharan Singh, who first started writing plays under the influence of Shakespeare. His first play, *Kamlā Kumāri* (1937), was designed as a romance suited to a medieval knightly atmosphere. The play uses the Shakespearian device of moving about incognito. *Rājā Porus* (1938), a historical play, eulogizes King Porus as a true Punjabi. *Khedan De Din Chār* (Four Days for Pleasure, 1942) reconstructs the romantic atmosphere of *As You Like It* in a present-day context. The playwright's *Anjoṛ* (The Incompatible, 1942) presents the social problem of unmatched couples united in wedlock in Indian society. In *Rattā Sālū* (Red Mantle, 1957) he deals with the problems of the poor peasantry exploited by greedy and corrupt landlords in collusion with equally depraved and selfish bureaucracy. When the peasant worker Joga meets his tragic end, his mother holds the red flag soaked in his blood and expresses her determination to continue the struggle against the landlord. The mother is reminiscent of the brave mother of Pavel in Gorky's novel *Mother*.

Harcharan Singh seems to have acquired with time greater maturity and understanding of the social problems of his age. In *Śobhā Śaktī* (The Power of Sobha, 1961) he presents the theme of the economic emancipation of the Indian woman from her dependence on man. The idea is from Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, but lacks the latter's strength. When Nora, in *A Doll's House*, bangs the door on her husband, the sound is believed to have been heard all over Europe. But in Harcharan Singh's play, Sobha bangs the door thrice—on her father, husband and, finally, on her son, one after the other, but the sound is heard nowhere.[7] In *Kāñchan Māṭṭi* (Golden Earth, 1965), Harcharan displays a little better understanding of the social problems of the Indian woman. In some of his later plays, such as *Itihās Jawāb Māngdā Hai* (History Demands an Answer) and *Chamkaur Di Garhi* (The Fortress of Chamkaur), he tries to step across the limits of realism and successfully employs the impressionistic and expressionistic techniques of the modern experimental stage in the West. In *Itihās Jawāb Māngdā Hai* he attempts to link an incident 25 years old with the present, through techniques employed in the experimental theatre. In the words of Attar Singh (b. 1932), though Harcharan Singh maintains his zeal for popular theatre, 'his plays do not betray any significant aesthetic ambition or intellectual distinction. Sentimental and melodramatic in the extreme, these plays are more akin to Nanak Singh's novels than to any modern writing.'[8]

The Popular Theatre

The popular theatre nurtured by Harcharan Singh was taken forward by Gurdial Singh Khosla (b. 1912), Roshan Lal Ahuja (b. 1904) and Gurdial Singh Phul (b. 1911), all playwrights of the first generation.

Gurdial Singh Khosla was inspired by the theatre during his student days in the early thirties at Government College, Lahore. He was greatly influenced during his formative years by Galsworthy (1867–1933), whose satire on the British upper middle class he found quite relevant to India. He founded Little Theatre groups in Lahore in 1940 and revived them in Delhi in 1947, after the Partition. He has dramatized topical themes in his one-act plays as well as in his full-length ones. In his one-act play *Beghare* (The Homeless), he focuses attention on the troubles and tribulations of refugees from West Pakistan and praises their courage and fortitude. In *Būhe Baithi Dhī* (Daughter at Her Parents' Doorstep), he deals with the problems of a young girl for whom her parents find it difficult to find a suitable match. In *Jutiān dā Joṛā* (A Pair of Shoes) a comic situation built up around the character of a suspicious wife. *Bāki Fir* (The Rest Sometime Later) portrays the difficulties of bus travel in the metropolis, while *Murde dā Reṣan* (Ration for the Dead) presents a funny situation in a greedy family when its members take their father for dead. *Mar Mitṭṇe Wāle* (Those Who are Ready to Sacrifice Their Lives) is a saga of the people who offered their lives for India during the Freedom struggle. His latest full-length play *Parlo* on

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Pehlon (Before Doomsday) is a realistic portrayal of the pitiable condition of a middle-class family that lives in one room and has twelve mouths to feed with the wages of three. All these plays, though based on realistic situations, tend to be characterized by an overdose of sentimentalism.

Khosla has also successfully staged in Delhi a Punjabi adaptation of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. This was the first play by Shaw ever presented in Punjabi.

Roshan Lal Ahuja, who started writing Punjabi plays after the Partition, has written a number of one-act plays dealing with that bloody tragedy. *Abla* (The Weak), *Śaṛṇārthi* (The Refugee), *Hāe Meri Dhī* (Oh, My Daughter), *Pakistāni Rāj* and *Pakistān Ke Parlo* (Pakistan or a Windstorm) are all on this theme. Ahuja portrays his characters in larger-than-life manner, whereby they evoke admiration for their heroic deeds.

Roṣan Āra (1951), *Baisākhi* (1953) and *Kaliṅga Da Dukhānt* (The Tragedy of Kalinga) are Ahuja's historical plays. His plays on contemporary social themes include *Talāq* (Divorce), a plea for the Indian woman's right of divorce, *Bedakhli*, in which the sister of a landlord leads the peasants against her brother, and *Daj* (Dowry), an indictment of the dowry system of the Indian middle class.

The playwriting of these popular writers appears, on the whole, to be untouched by modernism. Their plays often turn out to be farcical or melodramatic and in no way rise above the level of the *Rām Līla*.

The Progressive Trend

Harcharan Singh and the playwrights who followed his lead have undoubtedly added quantitatively to the body of dramatic literature in Punjabi, but they have offered little by way of quality, which appeared only when stalwarts like Sant Singh Sekhon, Balwant Gargi and Amrik Singh (b. 1921) made their contribution. It is these writers who have brought vigour and freshness to Punjabi drama.

Sant Singh Sekhon. Sant Singh Sekhon has given a new dimension to 'Punjabi drama by committing the genre to a dialectical interpretation of contemporary reality'.[9] He has made a significant contribution by evolving a form of drama which is called intellectual drama. In this type of drama the emphasis is shifted from presenting matter-of-fact details of social reality to subjecting the themes to intellectual insight and philosophical scrutiny. In his most controversial play *Kalākār* (The Artist, 1946) the playwright reinterpreted the myth of Ahalya in a modern context. Against the background of the original myth, the writer depicts the modern woman's quest for individuality.

Sekhon, who gives a Marxist interpretation to history, has a bold and exciting view of some events in the history of the Punjab. For example, in *Moian Sār Na Kāi* (Gone and Forgotten), he deals with the 40 years of the tragic life of Maharaja Duleep Singh from adolescence to death. Sekhon provides in the play a glimpse of a Punjab subservient to the British and projects in bold relief the tragedy of the lost glory of the Punjabi people—both Hindus and Muslims. The playwright depicts Maharaja Duleep Singh as having lost all patriotic feeling, so much so that he wants to present the Koh-i-noor to Queen Victoria himself. His revolt comes when it is too late. The author, speaking of the play, points out that the purpose of this tragedy is to show that 'the leaders of this falling empire were not aware of the fact that they were stepping into rot after having become a nation'.[10] He likens the situation of the present-day Punjab to that sordid situation of the past and feels that even today the leaders are not aware of the rot.

In *Beṛa Bandh na Sakyo* (You Did Not Bind the Logs of the Float), Sekhon deals with the period between the mysterious death of Maharaja Naunihal Singh and the enthroning of Duleep Singh. In this and other historical plays, Sekhon follows the historical events too rigidly to build dramatic conflict. This results in a large canvas, diluting concentrated action in the plays.

Sekhon received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his latest play *Mitter Piara* (The Dear One). In it he pays glowing tribute to Lenin for the friendship and sincerity shown to the people of India. In the play, two groups of Indian revolutionaries, one led by Bhai Rattan Singh, the other by M. N. Roy, visit Moscow. They meet Lenin separately and seek his advice on how best to fight British rule. They are advised to join hands with the Indian National Congress. One group is asked to organize the peasants, the other, the urban proletariat. Lenin, however, does not approve of the subjective approach adopted by M. N. Roy. This play too falls a victim to Sekhon's weakness for detail, which dilutes dramatic conflict and makes the play an intellectual discussion.

In *Wāris*, Sekhon presents the character and personality of the famous Punjabi poet, Waris Shah, with a curious blend of history, imagination and romance. Other important plays by him are *Nārki* (Denizens of Hell, 1952), *Bhūdān* (1954) and *Damayanti* (1962). In *Nārki*, Sekhon draws a picture of an imaginary hell in the domestic life of a black marketeer; in *Bhūdān*, the playwright shows the futility of the Bhoodan Movement of Vinoba Bhave and exhorts peasants and workers to rise; and in *Damyanti*, he resurrects an old legend to affirm his faith in man's future.

Sekhon has successfully tried his hand at one-act playwriting also. Some of his short plays, such as *Ik Aitwār* (A Sunday), *Haṛtāl* (Strike), *Dūja Viāh* (Second Marriage) and *Mahātmā* (The Elevated Soul) are different from the traditional one-act plays in theme as well as technique. Most of his plays portray the conflict between the capitalists and the workers from a progressive point of view. These plays are, more or less, intellectually brilliant discussions on contemporary social themes. They are replete with brisk, clever

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dialogue, but his characters are automatons. By and large, Sekhon's plays lack physical action, yet they provide an exciting fare for mature debate. Mohinderpal Kohli says that Sekhon's plays bear the indelible imprint of his western learning. In matters of technique and presentation, he follows the great masters of the West, with sustained and perpetual exploitation of the philosophy of Karl Marx. Ideas march through his works. 'For the first time, intellect dismantling the conventional edifices parades in the Punjabi drama.'[11]

Balwant Gargi. Balwant Gargi, an indefatigable writer, practically laid the foundations of a mature, professional theatre in Punjabi. His plays are a happy synthesis between the requirements of the stage and the demands of literature. Their dialogue has a literary grace and poetic charm. He has also exploited the rich folklore of the Punjab to make his plays memorable. The distinctive feature of his writing is the use of poetic symbolism in dramatic structures. Though his symbols are not capable of conveying the total situation, they do contribute towards intensifying the action.

Gargi, in his early years, was greatly influenced by the realistic movement popularized in western drama by masters like Ibsen, Synge, Maeterlink and Strindberg. His first play, *Lohakut* (The Blacksmith, 1944), took Punjabi readers by storm. It is a very sensitive play with a bold theme: the problem of suppressed passions. In it, the inner dreams and aspirations of both mother and daughter are crushed in the suffocating atmosphere of blacksmith Kaku's home. The daughter revolts against the orthodoxy and oppression and runs away. The mother follows the daughter's example and leaves Kaku even though they have been married 18 years. The play, if interpreted, 'at the symbolic level, shows Gargi confronting the elemental and primordial in human nature.'[12]

Shortly after this play, Gargi, influenced by Marxist ideology, wrote a number of plays with a Marxist slant. Notable among them are *Ghuggi* (The Dove), *Biswedar* (The Feudal Lord), *Sail Pathar* (Still Stones), *Kesro* (name of a woman), *Girjhān* (Vultures, 1951). These plays are on such themes as the World Peace Movement, the agrarian struggle, national reconstruction and polemics on committed art. Then in *Kaṇak dī Ballī* (Stem of Wheat, 1954), Gargi appears to depart from the realistic tradition of Punjabi drama by introducing lyrical elements from the indigenous folklore.[13] And in *Dhuṇi Di Agg* (The Dark Ritual), he completely breaks with the realistic tradition. In the words of Attar Singh, 'It is a play of dark primeval passions which seek articulation through the red heat of violent action dissolving distinctions between love and hatred, self-annihilation in sexual surrender and inviolable possession of the beloved through his murder out of jealousy.'[14]

Gargi's *Sultān Raziā*, a historical play, deals with an important, action-packed period of Indian history, from the scene of the dying Sultan Iltutmish, to the death of Sultan Razia. It is a period of uncertainty, conspiracies and ruthless killings for the throne. Balwant Gargi has attempted to give a universal meaning to history in this dramatization but only succeeds partially. Gargi's latest full-length play, *Saukan* (The Other Wife, 1979), deals with the triple relationship between mother-son-daughter. He presents the sexual rivalry between the daughter and the mother at the psychological level. This is rather a disappointing work for it does not give rise to any powerful dramatic conflict.

Apart from his creative writing, Gargi has written a scholarly book on stagecraft, which won a Sahitya Akademi Award.

Kartar Singh Duggal. Among the older generation, Kartar Singh Duggal (Kartār Singh Duggal, b. 1917), a leading fiction writer, has also written some plays that have been produced mainly by All India Radio. He is credited with developing the form of the radio play in Punjabi. To meet the needs of the radio play, he uses his characters as symbols. They do not emerge as full-blooded human characters.

His play *Purāṇiān Botlān* (The Old Bottles), is a meaningful critique of the unscrupulous behaviour of the urban middle class. Other notable plays by him are *Auh Gaye Sajan Auh Gaye* (There Goes Our Good Friend, 1942), *Ik Sifr Sifr* (One Zero Makes Zero, 1941) and *Miṭhā Pāṇī* (Sweet Water), all of which have been successfully broadcast several times over the radio. 'The significant achievement of Duggal in his plays is his use of rhythmic prose, sometimes giving an impression of free verse, after the technique of T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry.'[15]

Post-Independence Period

The important playwrights of the post-Independence period are Amrik Singh, Harsarn Singh (b. 1929), Surjit Singh Sethi (Surjīt Siṅgh Seṭhī, b. 1928), Gurcharan Singh Jasuja (Gurcaran Siṅgh Jasūjā, b. 1925), Kapur Singh Ghumman (Kapūr Siṅgh Gumman, b. 1927) and Paritosh Gargi (Paritoṣ Gārgi, b. 1923).

In his *Atīt de Parchāven* (Shadows of the Past), Ghumman 'portrays the tragic destiny of an unfortunate woman caught in the vortex of her past. The playwright here employs surrealistic techniques to bring out the inner reali-ties of the mind. The use of inner conflict, memory and hallucinations, as media of expression, make this play a bold experiment in Punjabi theatre.'[16] He plunges into experimentation in *Bujharat* (The Riddle), in which he dramatizes the life of the great Swedish dramatist Strindberg. In this play, he makes use of the dream technique and the symbolism of the sea to unfold the inner workings of his protagonist's mind.

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Surjit Singh Sethi, who had earlier written realistic plays on social themes, broke fresh ground in Punjabi drama when he wrote and produced a few experimental plays. His *King, Mirza to Sapera* (King, Mirza and Sapera) is reminiscent of Becket's *Waiting for Godot*. It was followed by *Naṅgi Sṛak Rāt dā Ujālā* (Naked Road, Lovely Night) and *Mard Mard Nahīn, Tīvīn Tīvīn Nahīn* (Man is not Man, Woman is not Woman) based on the techniques of Edward Albee and Tennesse Williams. *Eh Zindgi Hai Dosto* (This is Life, Oh Friends) is a significant satire on the corrupt social system. It utilizes the Theatre of Cruelty to achieve many effects.

Experimental Drama

The experimentalist drama in Punjabi received a further fillip from Paritosh Gargi. His *Luk Chip Jānā* (Hide and Seek) and *Chledā* (The Illusion) are authentic pieces of experimental structuring. Amrik Singh uses in *Parchhāviān di Pakar* (The Grip of Shadows) 'the episodic technique to build up to a sharp climax the crippling grip of the past on the life of an innocent victim of circumstance'. Harsarn Singh in his plays *Jigra* (Courage) and *Udās Lok* (The Dispirited People) has shown unusual vitality by bringing to bear critical realism on contemporary social problems. He brings out forcefully in *Udās Lok* the tensions in a joint family and its gradual disintegration. In the historical play, *Nizām Sakkā*, he presents in dramatic form the brief rule of Nizam, a water-carrier (Sakka), on whom the Mughal emperor Humayun had bestowed kingship for one day in reward for having saved him from drowning. The writer has tried to make this incident relevant to contemporary situation by projecting Nizam Sakka's rule as concretizing the dreams and aspirations of a socialist democratic welfare state.

Gurcharn Singh Jasuja is yet another playwright who has received wide acclaim for technical innovations and probing analysis of the inner-self in his plays. According to Haribhajan Singh (b. 1920), the distinctive feature of Jasuja's plays lies in the manner he combines poetic vision with the dramatic. In *Kandhān Ret Diān* (The Walls of Sand) and *Andhkār* (The Mist) he moves from visual symbols to word symbols, which not only help to unfold the meaning but also intensify the action in the plays. Even the titles of some of his plays, such as *Makkarī dā Jāl* (The Spider's Web), *Kandhān Ret Diān*, *Gaūmukhā Śer-mukhā* (Cow-shaped—Lion-shaped) are symbolic. His latest play, *Rachna Rām Banāi*, is based on the verse of Guru Tegh Bahadur which implies that the Lord is the creator of the world and every object in it takes its shape according to His will. The play, a fine example of the dramatization of an idealistic theory of Creation, is a distinguished work possessing literary grace and artistic excellence.

Some poets have written memorable verse-plays in Punjabi. *Bābā Bohar* (The Old Banian Tree) by Sant Singh Sekhon, *Tār Tupka* (A Drop Hanging by a String, 1957) by Haribhajan Singh, *Bīmār Sadi* (The Ailing Century) by Ravinder Ravi (b. 1933), *Lūnāṅ* (name of a woman) by Shiv Kumar (1936–'73) and *Laṅgrā Āsmān* (The Lame Sky) by Ajaib Kamal (b. 1932) are some of the plays in this genre.

Experimental drama made its presence felt in the hands of a couple of young playwrights and directors, like Atamjit Singh (b. 1950) and Ajmer Aulakh (b. 1949). Aulakh brings to his plays the reality of rustic life, rooted in the earth, poignant and naturalistic. Atamjit's reality does not strike as directly as Aulakh's earthy rhythms, but gradually dawns on his audience through symbols and imagery. Ajmer Aulakh's strength is the dialectical potential of the Punjabi language. His plays are popular with urban as well as rural audiences because he treats the common man's problems convincingly.

The Present

Early Punjabi theatre catered primarily to the urban middle class and its intent was to bring about social reform. Whatever the conflicts presented, these plays focused on the domestic and the romantic. The characters were generally stock types and the denouement proceeded on familiar lines. According to Sant Singh Sekhon, Punjabi theatre in its early days was rhetorical, with emotions and sentiments having great importance.[17]

During the forties there emerged a significant Punjabi theatre in Lahore. Balraj Sahni (1913–73), Balwant Gargi, Joginder Bahrla (b. 1936) and Tera Singh Chan (b. 1921) gave a meaningful dimension to theatrical activity. But then the Partition interrupted the establishment of a robust Punjabi theatre. Uprooted from the nuclear cultural centre of Lahore, theatre activity received a serious setback when it was dispersed to Simla, Patiala, Jullundur, Amritsar, Delhi and later, Chandigarh. Nowhere could it make its presence felt. At all these places Punjabi theatre remained a localized affair with no distinctive character of its own.

It was only in the sixties that the theatre movement in India attained maturity and professional skill. The National School of Drama in Delhi brought about a purposeful dialogue among the theatre-folk of the different regions of India. This gave a new orientation to Punjabi theatre in the Punjab as well as in Delhi and Bombay. Professionally trained young artistes like Bansi Kaul, Suresh Pandit, Harpal Tiwana and his wife Neena and Gurcharan Singh Channi have made a significant contribution to Punjabi theatre by bringing to it a new vitality and vigour. The establishment of the departments of Indian Drama and Asian Theatre at Punjab University, Chandigarh, and Speech and Drama at Punjabi University, under the gui-

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dance of Balwant Gargi and Surjit Singh Sethi respectively, has led to some bold experiments in theatre.

For some time now, Punjabi theatre has been regaled with what is called the 'hilarious adult comedy'. Prem Jullundury pioneered these laugh-a-minute sex comedies. These Punjabi farces with salacious titles have been attacked, defended, even threatened, but they have survived to become big box-office hits. Mahesh, Surinder Mathur and several others, along with actors such as Kimti, Deshi, Bholi and Sood, have won unprecedented fame for such comedies.

The Punjabi theatre during the seventies had started having an impact, with a number of theatre groups struggling to free it from the bonds of tradition. The Delhi Art Theatre of Sheila Bhatia has earned a reputation for its Punjabi operas; Gursharn Singh's Amritsar School of Drama has developed a theatre for the masses; Atamjit, a playwright-director, has, through his Kala Mandir, Amritsar, combined dramatic dexterity with ingenious devices while exploring new modes of expression on the stage. Ajmer Aulakh has evolved a new, robust theatrical idiom from the folklore of the Punjab. Devinder Daman and Jaswant Daman, the director-actress, husband-wife team, have, through their Norah Richards' *Raṅg Mañch*, introduced new modes of action in religious-historical plays. Ashwani Chattlee, Tripta Bhasin and Rama Rattan, based in Ludhiana, have promoted the cause of the children's theatre in Punjabi. In short, the Punjabi theatre, now being developed by professionally trained, producer-dominated groups, is on the threshold of an exciting new era.

NOTES

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2. Ibid., p. 101.
3. Sir Jogendra Singh, Foreword to *Subhadra*, 1920, p. 4.
4. Attar Singh, 'Punjabi Theatre—A Perspective', *Enact*, Jan.-Feb. 1980, nos. 157–58, Punjabi Theatre Number.
5. Mohinder Pal Kohli, op. cit., p. 103.
6. Ibid.
7. S. N. Sewak, 'Tradition and Experiment', *Enact*.
8. Attar Singh, 'Punjabi', in *Indian Literature Since Independence—A Symposium*, ed. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, p. 246.
9. Harbans Singh, *Punjabi Writing Today*, p. 8.
10. Sant Singh Sekhon, Introduction to the Play *Moian Sār na Kāj*, 1968, p. 5.
11. Mohinder Pal Kohli, op. cit., p. 110.
12. Attar Singh, 'Punjabi', in *Indian Literature Since Independence—A Symposium*, p. 247.
13. Harbans Singh, *Punjabi Writing Today*, p. 9.
14. Attar Singh, 'Punjabi', in *Indian Literature Since Independence—A Symposium*, p. 247.
15. Mohinder Pal Kohli, op. cit., p. 125.
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Sanskrit

T. G. MAINKAR

The Origins

The origins of Sanskrit drama still puzzle its students. Various theories about its origin have been proposed by different scholars, but none of them seems satisfactory or acceptable. Weber and Windish maintained that India borrowed the Drama from Greece. Sylvain Levi is of the view that it was the Saka influence that had contributed to the birth and growth of Sanskrit drama. In the Girnar Inscription (A. D. 150) of the Saka Rudradāman are found the words 'svāmin', 'sugṛhītanāman' and 'rāṣṭrīya' that occur as words of address in Sanskrit plays. The character of Śakāra was also probably suggested by the Sakas, who must have patronized the arts but, being foreigners, might have later become unpopular. Pischal, basing his reasoning on the use of the word *sūtra-dhāra* in Sanskrit drama to indicate the principal stage-manager, has suggested that this drama probably developed out of the popular 'puppet plays' which were staged with the help of strings ('sūtra'=string).

The words 'nāṭaka' (drama) and 'naṭa' (actor) are derived from the root 'nṛt' (to dance). The root 'naṭa' means mime. As there is every indication of a close relationship between drama and dance, it is likely that drama arose out of dance or, at least, in close association with it. It is now generally accepted that when ballads were recited in ancient times, they were always accompanied by music and dramatic dance and that the drama must have originated from this practice. Schroeder finds the origins of Sanskrit drama in the ballads of the *Ṛgveda*, popularly known as the *samvāda-sūktas*, the Dialogue Hymns or the *ākhyāna* hymns. These hymns, about 15 in number, are no doubt, somewhat obscure but can, on the whole, be regarded as 'more or less perfect dramas'. Hertel is inclined to find the germs of Sanskrit drama in the *Suparṇādhyāya*, which deals with the story of Kadrū, Vinatā and the snakes. He concludes that dramatic poetry of this kind might have served as a connecting link between the Vedic drama and the classical drama. If it can be allowed that every primitive story is a drama, then it is reasonable to regard these hymns as the base for the later classical drama.

The Religious Element

The roots of Sanskrit drama lie embedded, to an extent, in religious cults. Hillebrand has shown that the ancient rituals possess some dramatic element. This ritual-dramatic-element might then represent the second phase of Sanskrit drama. This drama later came to be associated with the festival of Indra, the *Indradhvaja*. The different religious cults, such as the Krishna-cult, Siva-cult and Vishnu-cult, have also contributed considerably to the development of Sanskrit drama. This may constitute the post-Vedic development of Sanskrit drama.

If the words 'naṭa', 'nāṭya' and 'nāṭaka' establish the relationship of drama with dance and mime, the words 'nāndī' and 'pūrva-raṅga' establish its relationship with some religious ceremony. This ceremony, originally of considerable duration, was gradually shortened and, in the classical drama, survived only in the form of the *nāndī* verse, the *pūrva-raṅga* being dispensed with altogether.

While the Hindu dramatists dealt with incidents from the life of Rama, Krishna or Siva, the Buddhists delighted in dealing with incidents from the life of the Buddha. Bhavabhūti presents clear evidence of the performance of his plays on the occasion of temple fairs. It may be gathered from the Mahabharata that the 'wandering minstrels' (*Śailūṣas* and *Kuśīlavas*) and comedians (*Naṭas*) entertained their audiences with popular plays. No play of this type has been preserved, yet the existence of such plays is clearly indicated. This popular drama was religious in character, since it dealt with the godly actions of Rama or Krishna or the Buddha and others. It may be argued that these plays were rarely written, their dialogues either having been committed to memory or been improvised.

From this point of view it would seem that early Sanskrit plays had a distinct aristocratic tradition, using as they did subtle themes, ornate poetry, lofty ideals and a court atmosphere. It is perhaps in the *upa-rūpakas* that this original popular tradition of Sanskrit drama is somewhat preserved. In the familiar 10 forms of drama (*daśa-rūpakas*), the cultured aristocratic tradition of drama is found preserved.

Daśa-Rūpakas

Bharata in his *Nāṭyaśāstra* (The Science of Dramaturgy) lays down the guidelines for the Indian theatre and also for the dramatists and actors. While speaking of the drama, he mentions 10 types: *Nāṭaka*, *Prakaraṇa*, *Bhāṇa*, *Prahasana*, *Ḍima*, *Vyāyoga*, *Vīthī*, *Samavākāra*, *Utsṛṣṭikāṅka* and *Īhāmṛga*. In addition to these 10 principal forms of Sanskrit drama (*rūpakas*) 18 *upa-rūpakas*, subordinate forms, are mentioned. These are what may be called the popular forms

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of the dance-drama. There are today available specimens of only some of these forms of drama.

Of the 10 major forms, the *Nāṭaka* and *Prakaraṇa* deal with serious themes and seem to have been popular. Most of the plays available today belong to either of these two types. The *Nāṭaka* deals with mythological and royal themes and moves in an unreal atmosphere. The *Prakaraṇa*, however, is a social play in which ministers and their children, merchants and their friends, Brahmins and cultured courtesans, appear as principal figures. The *Nāṭaka* appears to be linked with the early religious and semi-religious drama and ballad poetry, while the *Prakaraṇa* is associated with the early popular drama. The difference between the forms is based on the status of characters, the number of acts, the *rasas* to be developed and the styles adopted. There are, today, only two full *Prakaraṇas* available, the *Mṛcchakaṭika* (The Clay Cart) of Śūdraka and the *Mālatīmādhava* of Bhavabhuti, but to judge from references to such plays in works on dramaturgy, it is clear that there must have been many more.

The *Vyāyoga* also seems to have been a popular dramatic form, to judge from the *Vyāyoga* of Bhāsa. There are several *Prahasanas* that have humour as their predominant theme and a number of *Bhāṇas* that are monologues full of erotic narrative. As most examples of these dramatic forms are productions of a later, degenerate period, it is not possible to have a proper idea of their original forms. The *Bhagavadajjukīya* of Bodhayana (4th century) appears to be an ideal *Prahasana*. Similarly, the *Caturbhāṇī* (5th century), a group of four earlier *Bhāṇas*, suggests the immense possibilities of the form in the hands of clever playwrights, though plays of this type suggest a degenerate society and low artistic taste. Examples of the *Ḍima*, *Utsṛṣṭikāṅka*, *Samavākāra*, *Īhāmṛga* and *Vīthī* forms are no longer available. Neither can an adequate idea of these forms be formed from the definitions available in works on dramaturgy. Any attempt to form some idea as regards their structure, content and quality, based on their names and etymologies, can only be conjecture.

The *Upa-rūpakas* are full of dance, song and mime, but are mediocre in literary quality; yet two of these forms, the *Nāṭikā* and the *Troṭaka*, have gained considerable recognition. The *Nāṭikā* is a form that is intermediate between a full *Nāṭakā* and a *Prakaraṇa*. It is in four acts and deals with romantic love. This form almost attained perfection with Harsha. The *Troṭaka* deals with the love between a human being and a demi-god, as in the case of Purūravas and Urvaśī, a mortal king and a nymph. Abhinavagupta has objected to such themes on the grounds that the miseries and feelings of semi-divine beings are not real and have no appeal to mortals; lacking the capacity and emotional strength to move them. There is always, in such plays, a feeling of the action taking place in an unreal world.

Lack of Tragedy. It is clear from this that early Sanskrit drama had a pleasure play, a social play, a monologue and a farce. The definitions of other forms indicate the existence of plays that were dominated by women and wherein their wailing—possibly due to the consequences of war and violence—was the main theme. Yet it is striking that tragedy is completely absent in these different forms. Bharata holds the view that neither death nor conflict of arms should be shown on the stage. It is, perhaps, this restriction that explains the absence of tragedy in Sanskrit drama. But it is significant that he recognises *Karuṇa* as one of the principal *rasas* and allows it to be developed in a play. The *Uttararāmacarita* (8th century) of Bhavabhuti is a remarkable achievement in this respect. It would therefore be proper to say that Bharata did not allow a tragedy, but did allow the development of the tragic in a play. The *Abhijñānaśākuntala* of Kalidasa and the *Uttararāmacarita* of Bhavabhuti have much that is tragic in them, but they are not tragedies in the western sense of the term.

Bhasa seems to have been the only playwright who thought of writing tragedies. His two tragedies *Ūrubhanga* (The Smashing of the Thigh) and *Karṇabhāra* (The Burden of Karna), suggest an earnest effort on his part to achieve something distinct from the known literary forms presented on the stage during his times. Dealing, as they were, with human experiences, the Sanskrit playwrights, as well as writers on dramaturgy, could not remain blind to the element of the tragic in life, but their general philosophical outlook possibly prevented them from developing this realisation to its logical conclusion. Thus, this form, so popular in the west, did not appear in India.

Both Kalidasa and Bhavabhuti were aware of the destiny (*bhavitavyatā*) that decides human affairs in a capricious manner, but at the same time they had total faith that ultimately all would be well with those who were virtuous and pious. It was this that deprived Sanskrit drama of tragedy in the western sense of the term.

Bharata's Guidelines

Bharata has given guidelines for plot-construction, development of emotion, the *rasa*, dress and use of language for characters in a play. The proper development of the intended *rasa* through all these elements is the main objective of the dramatist. The actor only contributes to this aim of the dramatist through his acting (*abhinaya*). The literary elements, such as figures of speech (*alamkāras*) and various metres, are also used with the same objective in view. Bharata speaks of an elaborate scheme of developing rasa, the highest aesthetic pleasure, through proper delineation of the permanent sentiments (*sthāyi*), the derived emotions (*vyabhicārī*), the consequential gestures (*anubhāvas*) and the stimulants (*vibhāvas*).

The plot, according to Bharata, should be cast in the

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five *Sandhis*, the junctures, which are called *mukha*, *pratimukha*, *garbha*, *vimarśa* and *nirvahaṇa*. These five divisions correspond to the five divisions called exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement in western dramatic criticism. Bharata gives a list of 64 subdivisions of these junctures, through which the plot moves from start to finish in a logical manner. Matters necessary for the development of the plot but which need not be shown on stage should be relegated to the introductory scenes which are played by inferior characters either at the beginning of an act or in between two acts. The plot may be a simple one, consisting of only a principal story; or a complicated one, having a principal story and a subordinate one. The proper relationship between the two plots should be maintained and the subordinate plot should contribute to the development of the main plot. Kings and ministers should use Sanskrit, while all other characters should speak in the different prakrits. This restriction was probably an attempt to introduce realism. Ladies, on rare occasions, could use Sanskrit.

Bharata speaks of the four *vṛttis*: the *kaiśikī*, *bhāratī*, *sāttvatī* and *ārabhaṭī*, which are the dramatic modes: the elegant, the verbal, the energetic and the violent, respectively. These are vitally connected with the development of the *rasa*, and the dramatist is advised to resort to the proper *vṛtti*, keeping in mind the *rasa* he desires to develop. The *rasas* that can be developed in a play are the *Śṛṇgāra* (erotic), *Vīra* (heroic), *Karuṇa* (compassion), *Hāsya* (humour), *Bibhatsa* (aversion), *Bhayānaka* (fear), *Raudra* (anger) and *Adbhuta* (wonder). The *Adbhuta*, should be used only in the last phase of a play. In addition to these 8 *rasas*, a 9th *rasa*, *Śānta*, is spoken of, but the text relating to this *rasa* is, in all probability, an interpolation and authorities like Dhanañjaya are clearly against its employment in drama for the simple reason that *Śānta* basically requires inaction and disinterestedness, whereas drama is action.

All these guidelines have only succeeded in making Sanskrit plays dramatic poems rather than dramas proper. There is more poetry and emotion in Sanskrit drama than action.

All Sanskrit plays open with a *Nāndī* verse which is often a prayer to Siva, the deity of dance and theatre. Then follows an introductory scene in which the 'sūtra-dhāra' and his wife give information about the playwright, the play and its theme. At the end of the play there is the *Bharata-vākya*, which is an invocation of blessings for the reigning king and his subjects. The verse, recited by all the characters together, is known as *Bharata-vākya* as it is in honour of Bharata. An alternative explanation is that the verse is known as *Bharata-vākya* because all the Bharatas, the actors, sing it.

It is curious that the epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, do not offer any very reliable evidence regarding the performance of a play. Kautilya, however, speaks of permission being granted to people to go during the night to witness performances. It is also strange that the first evidence of the existence of a full-fledged Sanskrit drama comes from a Buddhist author, Asvaghosha (Aśvaghoṣa), of the 1st century A.D.

Asvaghosha. Asvaghosha, who lived in the 1st century A.D., has been associated with the Kuṣānas, particularly Kanishka. In 1911, H. Luders found, among the manuscripts from Turfan, pieces of three leaves of a palm-leaf manuscript of a play by Asvaghosha. This manuscript has preserved the 9th act of a play. Its colophon reads: 'Śārīputta-prakaraṇa' or 'Śaradvatīputraprakaraṇa', of the poet Asvaghosha, the son of Suvarṇākṣī. The leaves, which are incomplete, record a dialogue between Śārīputta and Maudgalyāyana, two followers of the Buddha. The material offered is meagre, yet it is sufficient to establish the qualities of the playwright. His sympathies with Buddhism are obvious. He is critical of the rigid caste-system of established Brahmanism; he observes: 'Medicine cures the patient even if it is given by a person of low caste.'

The play clearly shows that the norms and types of Sanskrit drama were well established by this time; for in it are to be seen all the conventions: the use of Vidūṣaka (the clown), the number of acts and the division of the plot into acts. Luders also found with this manuscript, fragments which indicate the existence of two other Buddhist dramas. One of them is allegorical featuring characters such as Intelligence (*Buddhi*), Patience (*Dhṛti*) and Fame (*Kīrti*), while the Buddha, with a halo around him, also participates. In the other, the characters are the Buddha, Sariputta, Maudgalyayana, an ascetic, a Brahmin, a courtesan and Vidushaka. The Vidushaka here is based on the classical model, a lover of sweet dishes and a creator of comic scenes. The fragmentary character of the piece does not reveal enough to deduce the plot of the play, but it could be a story of conversion to Buddhism.

The three plays indicated in the fragments Luders discovered suggest the existence of dramatic conventions, as found in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata, and seem to set the pattern for the classical drama of later times. Division into acts, the presence of the Vidushaka, change of language from Sanskrit to Prakrits, use of prose and verse, and the use of the different metres known to classical poetry, are the elements found in these plays. The second play could have been a full-fledged *Prakaraṇa*, like the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, to judge from the characters and their names, for here is a story of Somadatta and a courtesan Magadhavatī, with the Vidushaka named Kumudagandha, a maid-servant, and a rogue (Duṣṭa). All these plays appear to be stories of conversion to Buddhism and it is tempting to regard them as compositions by Asvaghosha; for, he wrote for religious edification and not for 'art for art's sake'.

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Bhasa. Bhasa (3rd century A.D.) is the 'father of Sanskrit drama'. Kalidasa mentions him with reverence; which is a pointer to his date and quality. Those of his plays that are available reveal him to be a Brahmin and a devotee of Vishnu. Kalidasa appears to work under his influence; Bana (7th century), in his *Harṣacarita*, speaks of the successful plays of Bhasa and mentions a few of their characteristics; Vākpatirāja admires him and Rajasekhara speaks of the extraordinary merits of Bhasa's *Svapnavāsavadatta* (Vasavadatta Seen in a Dream) which even fire could not destroy.

Till 1910, Bhasa was only a great name. In that year, T. Ganapati Sastri (Gaṇapati Śāstri, 1860–1926) discovered a collection of manuscripts, of 13 plays, in South Travancore and published them with a learned introduction in which he identified them as the plays of Bhasa. These plays, known as the Trivandrum plays, are the subject of great controversy. From the point of view of technique and art, all the 13 plays form a homogeneous group and clearly indicate a common authorship. Since they include the *Svapnavāsavadatta*, a play that is undoubtedly by Bhasa, T. Ganapati Sastri concluded that all the plays in the group were by Bhasa. The matter is, however, not so simple. It is complicated by the fact that citations from the *Svapnavāsavadatta* by Bhasa, as given in works on poetics and dramaturgy, are not to be found in the Trivandrum *Svapnavāsavadatta*. Thus, certain situations and verses are absent in it. This raises the possibility of the Trivandrum play being an abridgement of the original play by Bhasa.

If one of these plays is an abridgement of an older play, then it is possible that the same is true of the other plays too in the group. The Chakyars (Cākyār) of Kerala are known to have given performances of plays for which they had prepared their own abridgements of stage editions. It is probable that these plays are such stage editions. There are, thus, three views about these plays: (i) that they are by Bhasa; (ii) that they are not by Bhasa; and (iii) that these plays are abridgements of plays by Bhasa. In our present state of knowledge, it is safest to accept the third view.

These 13 plays are divided into four groups: the Ramayana plays: *Pratimā* and *Abhiṣeka*; the Mahabharata plays: *Pañcarātra*, *Dūtavākya*, *Dūta-ghaṭotkaca*, *Madhyama-vyāyoga*, *Karṇabhāra* and *Ūrubhaṅga*; the Udayana plays: *Svapnavāsavadatta* and *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa*; and the social and Krishna-legend plays: *Avimāraka*, *Daridracārudatta* and the *Bālacarita*. There was a controversy recently over a 14th play, the *Yajñaphala* (The Fruit of Sacrifice), but the play has been proved to be spurious. In all these plays the *sthāpaka* who is the *sūtra-dhāra* of the later plays, conducts a very short prelude which leads right into the play proper. These preludes, however, say nothing about the author, nor do they mention the title of the play. The *Bharata-vākya* in these plays is identical and refers to a Rajasimha, possibly the ruling king. These plays also reveal the same idiom and syntax. All these elements establish the common authorship of these plays, whose dramatic quality and poetical merit are of a very high order. Even if editing of these plays by the Chakyars is admitted, what remains is decidedly by Bhasa and amply justifies the high praise showered on him by Kalidasa, Bana and others. In the matter of language and style, Bhasa appears to be closer to Kalidasa than to Asvaghosha and is to be placed between the two, somewhere around the 3rd century A.D.

In the plays based on the Ramayana, Bhasa attempts to dramatize the entire epic. The *Pratimā* (Statue) is a play in seven acts, in which the entire story of the Ramayana is presented. The main interest of the playwright, however, is in Bharata and Kaikeyi. The 'boon motif' of the epic is replaced by the 'śulka motif' and Kaikeyī is treated sympathetically. The death of Dasaratha is shown in a scene that is remarkably conceived. The reason for Rama leaving Sita alone—which made her abduction easier—is different from the one in the epic; here Rama goes out to bring the necessary material for the *Śrāddha* (Offering to the Departed), and not in pursuit of a golden deer. The innovations are bold. The use of dramatic irony is clever, as when Sita is (humorously) made to wear garments of bark. The news of the death of Dasaratha is conveyed to Bharata in the Statue Hall through the statue of Dasaratha, whence the play derives its title.

The *Abhiṣeka* (Coronation), a play in six acts, begins with the Sugriva episode and his coronation after the death of his brother Vālin (Bālin). It ends with the coronation of Rama after his return to Ayodhya. This play covers those episodes in the story of Rama which are not covered by the *Pratimā*. The *Abhiṣeka* lacks dramatic unity and effectiveness, but is remarkable for the sympathy which the playwright shows for Valin and Rāvaṇa. Rama is an incarnation of Vishnu, but no effort is made to offer any justification for his actions. The play is more the stringing together of situations than the neat development of a plot.

The three-act *Pañcarātra* (Five Nights), of the Mahabharata plays, dramatizes the events of the 'Virāṭaparvan' of the epic thus: Duryodhana agrees to give half his kingdom to the Pāṇḍavas in deference to the wishes of his teacher Droṇa, who refuses to accept any fees from him. Duryodhana lays down only one condition: that news of the Pandavas should be received within 'five nights'. The Pandavas, now in the 13th year of their exile, are staying with Virāṭa, the king of the Matsyās. The news of the death of Kīcaka is received and Bhishma rightly infers that Bhima must have killed the Matsya general. Bhishma advises Duryodhana to raid the rich cow-pen of Virata. A fight ensues, in which the Matsya prince Uttara, with the help of Arjuna in the guise of a dancing girl called Bṛhannala, defeats the Kauravas. Abhimanyu is taken captive by Bhishma. The real situation is then known within the stipulated time and half the kingdom is given to the Pandavas.

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The *Madhyama-vyāyoga* uses the episode featuring the demon Baka and the Brahmin family harassed by him. The main action revolves round Bhima, his wife Hiḍimbā and their son Ghaṭotkaca. Baka calls for the 'madhyama' (the middle one), the second son of the Brahmin, and Bhima, the second son of Kuntī, meets him. But the main interest centres on the scene between Bhima and Ghatotkaca. This is a one-act play, and in it pathos and humour are cleverly mingled.

The *Dūtavākya* is another one-act play. It is nothing more than a dramatization of the visit of Krishna to the Kauravas. The envoy of the Pandavas makes every effort to prevent the war. Duryodhana, however, entertains himself with a painting of the insult to Draupadī, obviously trying to annoy Krishna. Krishna is intensely human, but when Duryodhana tries to arrest him, he shows his all-pervading form and multiplies himself so that the hall becomes filled with Krishnas. He calls forth in anger and a mighty demon hands him his weapons. His vehicle Garuda also appears and he baffles Duryodhana. The *Dūta-ghaṭotkaca*, on the other hand, is pure invention on the part of the poet, for nowhere in the epic does Ghatotkaca appear as an envoy. The burden of the play appears to be the glorification of Krishna. Its dialogue is vigorous but there is nothing appealing in it except for the death-scene of Abhimanyu. The *Karṇabhāra* dramatizes the episode in which Indra, disguised as a Brahmin, successfully begs Karṇa to part with his miraculous ear-rings and mail, thus depriving him of his divine protection on the eve of his fight with Arjuna. This one-act piece is superb in its delineation of the psychology of Karṇa, who nonchalantly parts with his safety but not with his generosity. The entire atmosphere is suggestive of the doom of Karṇa.

The *Ūrubhaṅga* is a splendid one-act play in which King Duryodhana rises to heights unknown before. In the duel between him and Bhima, the latter smashes his thighs, defying the rules of battle, and fulfils his vow. Bhasa, on the other hand, defies the rules of dramaturgy and presents Duryodhana lying on the ground with broken legs. The scenes of touching pathos, between Duryodhana and his blind parents and between Duryodhana and his son Durjaya, are masterpieces of drama and poetry. In the end, Duryodhana dies and enters heaven like a true, haughty, unyielding king. This play is a memorable one, for it is the only play in the group which approaches a Greek tragedy. In it are found the merits of Bhasa at their best: invention and boldness in construction, lofty ideals and eloquent poetry.

The *Bālacarita*, which deals with the Krishna legend, may be included in this group for it follows the main account given in the *Harivaṁśa*. Its different acts present the different episodes in the life of the boy Krishna, such as the fight with the bull Ariṣṭa, the destruction of the Kāliya-nāga, the death of the wrestlers Cāṇūra and Muṣṭika, and, finally, the death of Kamsa, Krishna's main adversary. In this play Krishna also appears in his divine form. His weapons are also mentioned.

Of greater interest, perhaps, are the two Udayana plays. Chronologically speaking, the *Pratijñāyaugandharāyaṇa* should come before the *Svapnavāsavadatta* in the legends of Udayana, since it deals with the story of the love between Udayana and Vāsavadattā. The play, however, is more about political intrigue than romance. The hero and the heroine do not appear on the stage at any time, but their deeds are fully described. Mahāsena Pradyota takes Udayana captive through a ruse involving a wooden elephant. His object is to have Udayana marry his daughter, Vasavadatta. To this end, he appoints his prisoner her music teacher. The expected happens and they fall in love. Yaugandharāyaṇa vows to rescue Udayana and succeeds, but Udayana in the end marries Vasavadatta. Bhasa's main interest appears to have been Yaugandharayana, who has been skilfully presented.

The *Svapnavāsavadatta* is, however, the better play and is, in all likelihood, Bhasa's best. Udayana has lost his kingdom and needs a powerful ally to regain it. The soothsayers have forecast that Padmāvatī, a Magadha princess, will wed Udayana. Taking advantage of this fact, Yaugandharayana plans a ruse. He removes Vasavadatta from the palace and announces that she has been destroyed by fire. He, meanwhile, keeps her with Padmavati as her companion, stating that she is his sister and will stay with Padmavati while he goes on a pilgrimage. Padmavati then marries Udayana and he retrieves his kingdom. Vasavadatta is now discovered and everything ends happily. The plot is very neatly constructed and the incidents are, as a rule, multi-purpose in effect. As an illustration of this, the episode of the 'bachelor' in the very first act may be cited. His account assures Yaugandharayana of the progress of his scheme, informs Vasavadatta of the state of the king and his great devotion to her, and also draws young Padmavati towards the king. Similarly, keeping Vasavadatta with Padmavati is a clever device, for it ensures the safety of Vasavadatta while giving the two queens an opportunity to get to know each other. Vasavadatta, the senior queen, is put under considerable mental strain and is fully rewarded for her steadfast love and noble sacrifice. The fourth act, a bi-focal scene, is cleverly constructed, and the dream-scene, in which Udayana receives a vision of Vasavadatta, has few parallels or equals, for sheer beauty and imagination, in the entire range of Sanskrit dramatic literature. The deeply emotional poetry, clever dialogue, fascinating situations and Bhasa's clever use of dramatic irony make the play a memorable one.

Among the social plays, the *Avimāraka* deals with the love-adventure of Avimāraka, a Sauvīra king's son, who becomes a low-caste *śvapāka* due to the curse of a sage. He saves Princess Kuraṅgi, the daughter of his maternal

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uncle, from a furious mad elephant and the two fall in love. A nurse helps them to meet secretly in the palace. When the palace guards come to know of these meetings, they chase Avimāraka, who runs away and contemplates suicide. A Vidyādhara, however, meets him and gives him a magic ring with the help of which he can meet his beloved. When he finds her, she is about to end her life. He saves her. The curse ceases, and with the help of Narada, things come to a happy end. The theme has been taken from the *Bṛhatkathā*. The play is remarkable for its ornate poetry, humour and pathos, though there is an atmosphere of sentimentalism and melodrama about it.

The other social play, the *Daridra-cārudatta*, is of greater importance though it is incomplete. It is preserved only in four acts, but even this fragment is evidence enough to suggest that the famous *Mṛcchakaṭika* of Sudraka is but an enlargement of this play. The four acts of the two plays correspond perfectly. Bhasa's play is incomplete, but it reveals his usual boldness in conception of plot and character, his capacity to write clever dialogue, and the same directness in style which is to be seen in his other plays. It has been suggested that this play is an abridgement of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, but this does not seem probable.

Sudraka. Śūdraka, in all probability, wrote after Bhasa and before Kalidasa. Very little is known about the personal history of this playwright, who has been placed variously between the 2nd century B.C. and the 6th century A.D.

The *Mṛcchakaṭika*, literally 'the clay cart', is the love story of Vasantasenā, an accomplished and polished courtesan of Ujjayinī, and a noble merchant, Cārudatta, who has became impoverished due to his excessive generosity. The brother-in-law of King Pālaka, Śakāra, a villain and a fool, is madly in love with her, but she does not favour him. An unfortunate exchange of vehicles leads to Vasantasena being taken near Sakara in a garden. He strangles her there and accuses Charudatta in the royal court. Charudatta is sentenced to death, but is saved by the appearance of Vasantasena, who had been rescued by a Buddhist monk, a former gambler whom she had once helped. Charudatta helps Āryaka, whom he had met in prison, to escape. Palaka is then killed and Aryaka, now in power, allows Charudatta to marry Vasantasena. The plot is beautifully handled and the dialogue is extremely clever. The inspiration for the main story is obviously the *Daridra-cārudatta* of Bhasa, but the addition of the political background is Sudraka's.

Of all the Sanskrit plays this is the most remarkable for the realistic pictures it offers of life. The gamblers and their quarrels, the burglar active at night, the theft of the ornaments, the court and execution scenes are all realistically depicted. Humour, Sudraka's forte, is abundant in the play. Both qualities of humour, subtle and coarse, are found in it. Vasantasena and her maid Madanikā are delineated with rare skill and have few equals among the female characters in Sanskrit drama. Bold and cultured Sharvilaka, generous and noble Charudatta, friend for all occasions, Maitreya, haughty and conceited royal favourite Sakara, are characters to be found anywhere and have been rightly considered 'citizens of the world'. The meeting of the hero and the heroine in the first act, the theft of the ornaments and the exchange of carts, the court scene, are all skilfully contrived and reveal the dramatic genius of the playwright. His masterpiece is Sakara who, through his wickedness, provides the element of opposition and, who through his dress and language, is a source of humour. The action moves with a swiftness than is truly Shakespearian. The play might have ended as a perfect tragedy, but, as the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* points out, that would have been poor reward for the virtuous conduct of the hero. It is also essential, the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* adds, that people do not lose their faith in virtuous conduct.

Kalidasa. Kalidasa (c. A.D. 350–470) is universally acclaimed as the greatest of the Sanskrit dramatists. His three plays, the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Vikramorvaśiya* and *Abhijñānaśākuntala* have been widely read and the last named play, in particular, has won international acclaim since Goethe first praised it.

The *Mālavikāgnimitra* is a pleasant comedy full of wit, humour and gaiety. It has a historical background. The story deals with the fascination King Agnimitra of the Śuṅga dynasty had for Mālavikā, a Vidarbha princess who, in disguise, serves as a maid to the senior queen, Dhārinī. Agnimitra has two queens, Dharini and Irāvatī, and a son who leads his army in war. Due to some political disturbance in Vidarbha, the royal family has to flee and the princess, taken captive by the officers of Agnimitra, is sent to the palace as maid to the senior queen. Agnimitra, anxious to succeed in his new love, entrusts the affair to the care of the Vidushaka. It is Vidhushaka who conducts the entire plot, which, in the play, is nothing more than an intrigue. The examination in dance of Malavika, 'the Ashoka episode' and, finally, 'the ring episode' and the consequent release of the maid from prison, are all part of the scheme conceived by the Vidushaka. When it is ultimately discovered that the maid is, in reality, a princess, the queen relents and the lovers are united. There are in the play some fine scenes, such as the quarrel between the two teachers, the dance masters, the examination of Malavika, the 'Asoka-dohada' scene when Iravati arrives in an unexpected manner, and the serpent-bite episode; but despite these episodes, the play is not a great one, lacking depth as it does. The dialogue and the verse have the Kalidasa touch, but the play itself is only a promise of greater things to come. The unreality of the plot and the fact that the action is entirely manipulated by the Vidushaka reduce the interest of the play. It is, however, a pleasant comedy in so far as

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that type of *Nāṭikā* is concerned. Dharini, the jealous but sober queen, the irascible Iravati and the coy Malavika are interesting in their own ways, but cannot be regarded as great or noteworthy creations. Neither has the king the intensity of emotion of a Pururavas nor the dignity of a Dushyanta.

The *Vikramorvaśiya* strikes a deeper note. It deals with the love of Purūravas the king and Urvaśī the nymph. The valiant king rescues her while she is being carried away by the demon Keśi and gratitude results in admiration and love. Urvasi descends from the heavens to meet her lover on romantic moonlit nights. Indra, on discovering her affection, allows her to live with her mortal lover till she bears him a son. During a romantic sojourn in the Gandhamādana Hills, an angry Urvasi enters a forbidden forest as a result of petty jealousy and is turned into a creeper. Then follows the search for her by the king in the famous fourth act of the play. The king, by chance, comes upon a jewel, the *samgamanīya* stone, which leads to their reunion, Urvasi reappearing as soon as he embraces the creeper. The play ends happily with Urvasi, Pururavas and their son Āyus being reunited; for, now Indra has withdrawn his condition that Urvasi should return to the heavens on seeing the face of her son.

The essence of the story is very old and may be traced to a hymn in the *Ṛgveda* (X. 95) that treats this very theme. The theme also appears in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, *Viṣṇupurāṇa*, *Matsyapurāṇa*, *Padmapurāṇa* and *Kathāsaritsāgara*. This only shows that Kalidasa chose a folk-tale that was very popular and modified it to suit the construction of a play. The play reveals a considerable advance over the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, both in conception and execution. The famous fourth act, in which the grief-stricken king, searches for Urvasi, inquiring after her from the birds and beasts, is lyrical and musical. It also contains some very fine poetry. The play, which is considered a *Troṭaka*, as it deals with the love between a mortal king and a semi-divine nymph, is a delightful comedy.

The *Abhijñānaśākuntala* is universally considered Kalidasa's best work. It was, in all probability, written towards the end of his career; the last verse of the play, which is a prayer to Siva for release from rebirth, would seem to indicate this. The play deals with the love and lives of Sakuntala and King Dushyanta. The source of the plot is obviously the Mahabharata. The Mahabharata account is very simple and the characters in it are practical, matter-of-fact men and women. But in the play, there is a superb transformation of everything. The forest girl of the epic is transformed into a child of nature with rare grace and delicacy. The king is endowed with a certain dignity and a sincerity of purpose, both of which are lacking in the epic characterization. By introducing the curse of the sage Durvāsa, Kalidasa transforms the crude world of passion found in the epic into a world of delicate emotion and beauty, where destiny has a part to play. Kalidasa presents Sakuntala as a child of nature, innocence incarnate, and the king as a dignified monarch with decorum, humility and a regard for all that is sacred. He has no heir and this makes his love for the woodland girl more acceptable than Agnimitra's love.

The fourth and fifth acts are the finest Sanskrit drama has to offer readers. The fourth act deals with a typical everyday scene: a bride leaving her paternal roof for her husband's home. The touching pathos of the situation appeals to the Indian mind, which has acclaimed it as the best in the entire range of dramatic literature. Tradition also regards four verses that contain Kaṇva's advice to Sakuntala as well as his message to the king as the finest poetical composition by the poet. This is a view that is not easily acceptable, for there are verses in the other acts of the play that can easily surpass in beauty these didactic verses that are the choice of tradition. The entire scene is, however, delicately conceived and equally delicately executed. The preparation of the bride, the feelings of the trees and the birds for their beloved sister, the suggestions made through the fawn of impending doom, the feelings of the daughter as well as those of the father, the feelings of the friends, are all exquisitely done.

The fifth act is more dramatic and presents Sakuntala and Dushyanta face to face but under the shadow of the curse of which both know nothing. This is a conflict between two truths; on the one hand, Sakuntala knows that she has been married to the king; on the other, the king, as a result of the curse, does not remember anything about the marriage. Today's rationalist may or may not believe in witchcraft and curses, but the ancient Indian mind accepted these things as having a reality of their own. Once this is accepted, Dushyanta's loss of memory becomes understandable. If, however, this aspect is not accepted, the very essence of the poet's play will be missed. In the fifth act, as the matter stands, it is very difficult to take sides, for each steadfastly stands by the truth as she or he perceives it. The king readily consents to accept Sakuntala's contention, if she is able to produce evidence of the marriage; but Sakuntala is unable to produce the ring in court and she is repudiated. The calm, dignified confidence of the king in his own character is eloquently reflected in his words, as are the innocence, frustration and anger of Sakuntala in hers. No praise is too high for the achievements of the poet in this act of a play that has no serious rival in Sanskrit dramatic literature.

Visakhadatta. Viśākhadatta (7th–9th century) in the prologue to his play, the *Mudrārākṣasa*, informs the reader that he is the son of Mahārāja Bhāskaradatta and the grandson of Sāmanta Vaṭeśvaradatta. The concluding stanza (*Bharata vākya*) of the play, however, poses a problem. Since there are various readings for the name of the

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king mentioned in the verse—such as Dantivarman, Rantivarman, Avantivarman and Chandragupta—it is difficult to identify the king. This clue, therefore, is of no help in fixing the date of Visakhadatta. It has, however, been suggested that he flourished somewhere between the 7th and 9th centuries.

Visakhadatta's interest in early Indian history is obvious. It is an element that distinguishes him from the rest of the Sanskrit playwrights. His fame rests on the only play available today, the *Mudrārākṣasa*.

This seven-act play deals with the events after the destruction of the Nandas by Viṣṇugupta Cāṇakya with the help of Chandragupta Maurya. Chandragupta is installed on the throne and Vishnugupta's vow—to destroy the Nandas who had insulted him at a banquet, by ordering him to leave his seat—is fulfilled. Chanakya now wants to retire, but cannot do so until he provides Chandragupta, his protege, with an equally able and devoted minister to manage the affairs of state. He has in mind Rākṣasa, who is known for his excellent character, capacity for work and singular devotion to his master, the Nanda king. Rakshasa, meanwhile keeps alive efforts to render futile the revolution brought about by Chandragupta and Chanakya. The play deals with the political struggle between the two opponents, Chanakya and Rakshasa, and is unique in its disregard of any romantic element.

Rakshasa, with the help of Malayaketu, a prince of the hilly regions, creates a force to challenge Chandragupta. Chanakya ruthlessly schemes to foil Rakshasa and, in Chandragupta, has a valiant prince devoted to him. Rakshasa, on the other hand, is emotional and weak, because of his generosity and goodness, and in Malayaketu has a prince who is fickle, who has no faith in him and is willing to believe what he hears. Rakshasa almost walks into the traps set for him by Chanakya. Chanakya succeeds in making Rakshasa believe that he and Chandragupta have really fallen out. He also sows the seeds of doubt and mistrust in the mind of Malayaketu about Rakshasa. In the end, Rakshasa accepts office at the court of Chandragupta as planned by Chanakya.

The characters in this play are cleverly contrasted. Chanakya and Rakshasa as well as Chandragrupta and Malayaketu are brilliant studies in contrast. Though the play is about the unabashed use of deceit, impersonation and forgery, the lasting impression it creates is that of devotion and sacrifice. This play is reminiscent of Bhasa's *Yaugandharāyaṇa*, another play about devotion and intrigue, but there is, in the latter, an element of relief provided by the Vasavadatta-Udayana romance. Bhasa's play also lacks in the power which this play possesses; the organic unity of action and inevitability are remarkable elements here. Of all Sanskrit dramatists, Visakhadatta is perhaps the only one who clearly shows awareness of the great strain to which a dramatist is put while constructing a plot. As a result, the *Mudrārākṣasa* is a well-made play.

Sudraka, Vararuchi, Isvaradatta and Syamilaka. A collection of four one-act plays, dramatic monologues, technically called the *Bhāṇas* were, discovered and published in 1922. The single volume which contains these four *Bhāṇas* is popularly known as the *Caturbhāṇī*. The plays are the *Dhūrtaviṭasamvāda* (Dialogue Between the Wanton and the Fool) attributed to Īśvaradatta, the *Ubhayābhisārikā* (The Girl Who Meets Two Lovers) attributed to Vararuchi, the *Padmaprābhṛtaka* (The Present of a Lotus) attributed to Sudraka and the *Pādatāḍitaka* (The Lover Kicked) of Udīcya Śyāmilaka. These plays have all been assigned to the 5th century A.D. Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka and Kshemendra refer to the *Pādatāḍitaka*, hence the plays, all being together, should belong to earlier times. The general atmosphere in these plays is very similar to that in the *Mṛcchakaṭika*, to which they should, therefore, be nearer in time. In later times, the *Bhāṇa* form degenerated into something totally banal, but these early *Bhāṇas* have variety, simplicity, satire and a comic element in them. This would seem to indicate that they are somewhat early productions, but they are, at the same time, the best specimens of the form. In each of these one-act plays, the 'Viṭa' (libertine) speaks of the adventures of the hero, who is his friend. An effort has been made to introduce as much variety as possible in the narration.

In the *Dhūrtaviṭasamvāda*, the Vita is unable to entertain himself on a rainy day with dice and drinking. He therefore decides to call on his friend Vishvalaka. On reaching his friend's house, he finds his friend with a courtesan, Sunandā, and the three settle down to discuss a knotty problem, connected with the art of love. In the *Ubhayābhisārikā*, Kuberadatta, who has offended his beloved, Naravanadatta, asks his friend the Vita to bring about a reconciliation. The Vita sets out for her house, but on the way meets many people with whom he dallies. When he finally reaches his destination, he finds that the two lovers have already got together again. In the *Padmaprābhṛtaka*, Karaṇaputra Mūladeva asks his friend the Vita to find out the mood of Devasenā, with whom he had recently quarrelled. The Vita returns from her place with a gift—a lotus—indicative of reconciliation. In the *Pādatāḍitaka*, an assembly of rogues meets to discuss the question of expiation for the offence of Madanasenikā, a Saurāṣṭra girl, who had kicked Taundakoki Viṣṇunāga, the son of a minister and himself an officer of the king, on the head when she was intoxicated. There is nothing in this play but an amusing reduction to absurdity of the discussions that follow. In the end, it is decided that Madanasenika should place her foot on the head of the president of the assembly!

These one-act plays, set either in Ujjayinī, Kusumapura or Pāṭalīputra, are interesting because they offer pleasing

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caricatures of such different personalities, as a poet who lives by using the words and ideas of earlier poets, a grammarian who delights in using peculiar forms of speech in ordinary conversation even with his lady love, a *bhikṣu* who seeks to console a courtesan with the words of the Buddha, an old actor, a hypocritical Buddhist nun and so on. These are portrayals that are rarely found elsewhere. The language used here is simple and its grace is reminiscent of the *Mṛcchakaṭika*. The wit and humour found in these plays are far superior to that found in the later *Bhāṇas*. This collection of four *Bhāṇas*, therefore, represents the true *Bhāṇa* tradition and is, therefore, of immense importance to a student of drama and social history.

Harshavardhana. King Harṣavardhana Śīlāditya of Kanauj (606-648) has written three plays, *Ratnāvalī*, *Priyadarśikā* and *Nāgānanda*. Misinterpreting the mention made by Mammaṭa, in the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, of the generosity of Harsha in giving wealth to Dhāvaka and others, it has been suggested that Harsha bought these plays which were written either by Bana or Dhavaka. Themes, technique, similarities in structure, ideas and expressions, and the identical prologue leave no doubt whatsoever about the common authorship of the three plays. The *Ratnāvalī* and the *Priyadarśikā* deal with the Udayana legend and represent the *Nāṭika* type. In the *Ratnāvalī*, Udayana is married to Sāgarikā, whereas in the *Priyadarśikā* he is married to Āraṇyakā. The names of the two heroines are significant, for Sagarika is recovered from the ocean after a shipwreck whereas Aranyaka is recovered from a forest. Udayana, the Vidushaka Vasantaka his friend, the chief queen Vāsavadattā and Kāncanamālā, her maid, appear in both plays. There is, similarly, a repetition of situations and incidents; there are in both plays garden-scenes, meetings of the lovers arranged through intrigue, the appearance of the senior queen at an awkward time, a desperate situation for the heroine, her attempt at suicide and rescue by the hero, the imprisonment of the Vidushaka and the heroine by the senior queen, recognition of the heroine as a princess, acceptance of her as co-wife by Vasavadatta, and, in the end, a victory in war that creates an atmosphere of joy and mirth. The picture episode, the monkey episode, the Vasantotsava and the Kaumudī-utsava appear to be the favourite tricks of Harsha. The 'Garbhāṅka', a play within a play, is a noteworthy feature of *Priyadarśikā*. Of the two plays, the *Ratnāvalī* is the better, having a sustained interest. It has been popular with writers on dramaturgy who often refer to it to illustrate dramaturgic points.

The *Nāgānanda* deserves notice because of the obvious Buddhistic element in it. Harsha's inclinations towards Buddhism have been confirmed by foreigners who travelled in India during his reign. The play divides itself into two parts. The first is devoted to the development of the romance of Malayavatī and Jīmūtavāhana, which occupies three of the five acts of the play. The latter part of the remaining two acts deals with the story of Jimutavahana and Garuḍa and Garuda's acceptance of the creed of *Ahimsa* (non-violence). Garuda is promised a serpent every day. One day, it is the turn of Śamkhacūḍa to offer himself. Knowing that the only son of an aged mother is being sacrificed, Jimutavahana, with the red wedding garments still on his person, offers himself in an effort to save the life of Shamkhachuda. Impressed by the supreme sacrifice of the hero, Garuda agrees to spare the lives of the serpents thereafter. Jimutavahana appears as a Bodhisattva and the final calamity is averted by the intervention of Gauri. There is obvious artificiality in the construction of the play, yet it impresses because of the noble ideal it teaches. It also contains some fine poetry and clever handling of a few scenes. There is little humour to speak of in these plays, but it is clear that these plays are delightful court-comedies. Harsha is a clever poet but not a great one. Kalidasa's influence on him is clearly seen.

Bhatta Narayana. There is little reliable information about Mṛgarājalakṣman Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (6th century), the author of *Veṇīsamhāra*, an undoubtedly powerful play. There is a belief that Bhatta Narayana was one of the five Brahmins invited by King Adisura to Bengal, but this is debatable. There are references to the *Pañcarātra* doctrines in the play and there is also some criticism of the *Cārvākas*, but this does not throw any light on the author or his date. What can be stated definitely is that he must have preceded both Vāmana and Ānandavardhana, who cite from him.

The plot of *Veṇīsamhāra* is indicated in the title of the play itself. It is the story of the fulfilment of Bhimasena's vow to tie the loose tresses of Draupadi with hands gory from the destruction of the Kauravas. Bhimasena, therefore, has been given due prominence, but the play soon develops into an attempt to dramatize the entire epic, and long prose narrations mar the progress of the plot. The episodic character of the play maintains the atmosphere of war and the fury of revenge, but does not provide a well-knit unity. Impetuous Bhimasena, jealous Karna, frustrated Aśvatthāman and obstinate Duryodhana are fine characters. Spirited Draupadi and meek Bhānumatī are excellent studies in contrast. The prose and the verses are full of vigour and power, but obstruct the rapid movement of action.

Mahendravikramavarman. Mahendravikramavarman (7th century), who ruled in Kānchī some time about A.D. 620, was, in all probability a contemporary of Harsha of Kanauj. He has written a farce (*Prahasana*), *Mattavilāsa* (The Sport of the Intoxicated), which is a satire on his times, especially on the religious conditions obtaining then. The Prologue provides the information that the author is a king of the

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Pallava dynasty and is a son of Simhavarman. Inscriptional evidence available corroborates this authorship. The play deals with the drunken revelry of a Saiva mendicant who is a *Kāpālika* (one wearing a garland of skulls). He is shown with his girlfriend and engaged in a quarrel with a fraudulent Buddhist monk. His begging bowl, made from a human skull, has been stolen by a stray dog; it is in the end recovered from a mad man. The general atmosphere is neither pleasant nor edifying. Probably this was the popular concept of the *Prahasana* form. It is written admirably in a simple style and a somewhat satirical vein, but as a *Prahasana* it suffers in comparison with the *Bhagavadajjukīya* of Bodhāyana.

Dinnaga. The *Kundamālā* (Garland of Jasmine), a play that deals with the Rama story, is attributed to Diṅnāga, considered by some as Vīranāga or Ghoranāga. It is difficult to date the author, who reveals his acquaintance with South India and Sri Lanka. Many of the passages written by him are reminiscent of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti and Banabhatta. The garland of *kundā* flowers plays an important role in the recognition scene, hence the title of the play. The meeting of Sita and Valmiki is neatly done. The construction and style please with their simplicity and elegance.

Bhavabhuti. Bhavabhūti (8th century) bore the appellation Śrīkaṇṭha and the surname Udumbara. He was also a Somayājin. In the *Mahāvīracarita* (The Life of the Great Hero) which appears to be his first play, he tries to dramatize the events in the Ramayana, particularly the subject-matter of the six *Kāṇḍas* of the epic beginning with the visit of Rama to the hermitage of Viśvāmitra and ending with his return to Ayodhya. The play has obviously been inspired by the *Arthaśāstra* (Science of Wealth), for Bhavabhuti gives a political colouring to the conflict between Rama and Ravana who all the while works through his minister Mālyavat. As such, the episodes of Mantharā, Paraśurāma and Śūrpaṇakhā form a part of Malyavat's scheme to destroy Rama. The seed of jealousy and conflict between Rama and Ravana is naturally sown at the time of the svayamvara when Sita rejects Ravana and accepts Rama. The Valin episode forms the last link in Malyavat's scheme in the interests of his master. In moulding the plot thus, Bhavabhuti certainly reveals boldness in the art of construction and a sense of the dramatic.

The *Mālatīmādhava*, a full-length *Prakaraṇa*, develops a romantic love story in its ten acts. It is very difficult to be definite about the sources of the plot, but the poet deserves credit for blending interesting situations into a well-knit plot. The play has two love-stories, one principal and the other subordinate. Mālatī and Mādhava, the heroine and the hero in the principal story, are children of two ministers who have already agreed to marry them, but judiciously entrust the task to their class-friend Kāmandakī. The children do not know anything of this agreement and fall in love. The element of conflict is introduced by making Nandana, a royal favourite, interested in Malati. Makaranda, a trusted friend of Madhava, and Madayantika are the hero and the heroine in the subplot.

The characters in the subplot are more lively than those in the principal story, the latter appearing to be mere sentimentalists bewailing their fate. The entire action in the main plot is guided by Kamandaki, a fact that deprives the story of any great human element. Another element of conflict is provided by the Kāpālikas, Aghoraghaṇṭa, and his student Kapālakuṇḍalā, who are determined to offer a sacrifice of a female beauty to their goddess. Madhava kills Aghoraghanta and saves his lady love. After their marriage, Kapalakundala, to take revenge, again carries off Malati. But she is rescued with the help of Saudāminī, a friend of Kamandaki. The royal opposition is overcome by the trick of making Nandana marry Makaranda dressed and presented as Malati. Though the elements of contrast and suspense are used in the play, pure chance is given too free a rein. As a result, it is melodrama that is provided, not the agony of youthful love finely described. The characters excel in emotional outbursts and the capacity of the poet to give them suitable expression accounts for the appeal of the play.

The *Uttararāmacarita* is certainly the best of Bhavabhuti's plays. Generations of discerning critics have regarded it as a serious rival to the *Abhijñānaśākuntala* of Kalidasa for the first place in Sanskrit dramatic literature. As the title indicates, the play deals with the latter part of Rama's life, the subject-matter of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* of the Ramayana. Rama has returned to Ayodhya with Sita and after his coronation, his friends and relatives leave. His elders (i.e. mothers and preceptors like Vasistha) also leave Ayodhya to be present at the sacrifice at the hermitage of sage Ṛṣyaśṛṅga. Rama entertains the tired, pregnant Sita by showing her pictures of their past life. But even this is unbearable to her and she falls asleep. Rama hears the calumny about Sita and decides to abandon her though he is convinced of her innocence. Sita seeks a forest refuge near the hermitage of Valmiki under the pretence of fulfilling her vows during pregnancy.

After 12 years, Rama is back in Pañcavaṭi on a state mission, to punish an ascetic *śūdra*, when the familiar landscape revives memories of the happy past he had spent there with Sita. There is here some of the finest poetry Sanskrit drama has to offer readers. A superb dramatic device is used by Bhavabhuti. He makes Sita watch Rama unseen, so that she may herself perceive the grief and suffering of Rama and be convinced of his sincerity and the constancy of his love. She is overjoyed to hear that Rama had performed the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice with her golden image by his side. Complete psychological understanding and union is achieved and she forgives him.

The horse of the *Aśvamedha* (horse sacrifice) has been

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kept captive by the sons of Sita. A fight ensues between Chandraketu, the son of Lakshmana, the guardian of the horse, and Lava and Kuśa. They use the 'Jṛmbhakāstra', in the fight which only sons of Rama could use. Rama arrives on the scene and recognition slowly takes place. The play ends on a happy note, with the reunion of the family in Valmiki's hermitage.

Bhavabhuti has succeeded in making a known story a great story of conjugal love in this play. He is more a dramatic poet than a dramatist, for he does not possess the restraint and innate sense of economy so necessary for a true dramatist. The outstanding quality of Bhavabhuti is his high level of seriousness which only great idealists possess. Humour is altogether absent in his plays and he does not introduce the Vidushaka in any of them. It appears that his plays, because of their heavy diction and undramatic dialogue, were not popular theatre pieces. He has expressed his frustration very clearly in his *Mālatīmādhava*.

Murari. Murārī (10th century), son of Vardhamānaka and Tantumatī, lived under the Kālācuris. He mentions Māhiṣmatī as their seat and so could be placed in the beginning of the 10th century. His play, *Anargharāghava* (Raghava, the Invaluable) is a Rama play. The playwright himself says at the outset that he wrote the play, which is an elevated and charming composition, with the sole view of delighting readers who must have read and seen enough of terror and horror. Murārī seems to have been inspired by Bhavabhuti, and particularly his *Mahāvīracarita*, for he too treats the conflict between Rama and Ravana, brought about through the schemes of Mālyavat, as political strife. The play in seven acts is an attempt to dramatize the Ramayana. Murārī's poetic gift deserves some appreciation, but as a dramatist his performance is poor. The play was performed at the *yātrā* of Purushottama.

Rajasekhara. Rājaśekhara (10th century), son of Darduka and Śīlavatī, belonged to the Yāyāvara family. His family, which came from Maharashtra, had a literary tradition. He lived in the last quarter of the 9th century and the first quarter of the 10th century. His wife, Avantisundari of the Cauhān family, was a distinguished lady of literary tastes. It was for her that Rajasekhara wrote the play *Karpūramañjarī*. In all he wrote four plays, the *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, *Bālabhārata*, *Karpūramañjarī* and *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*. He was influenced by Bhavabhuti and Murari, whom heimitates.

The *Bālarāmāyaṇa*, a play in 10 acts, is an attempt to dramatize the Ramayana. Its bulk as well as execution make it an appalling monstrosity. There is no selection of incidents, no dramatic or skilful arrangement and no poetry worth the name. In its sister play, the *Bālabhārata*, except for a few good verses in the gambling scene, in the insult to Draupadi and in the departure of the Pandavas to the forest, there is little of interest.

The *Karpūramañjarī* and *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* are very similar in concept and execution, the only significant difference being that the former is entirely in Prakrit; Harsha's influence is seen here, but Rajasekhara has not been as successful as Harsha in handling this form, his plot-construction and characterization being weak. The *Karpūramañjarī* deals with the love of Caṇḍapāla for a princess, but instead of allowing the love to grow through a natural course of events, the playwright has chosen to rely on 'Tantrism', magic, underground passages and absurd games of hide and seek. Instead of the Vidushaka, there is here a magician, Bhairavānanda, the spiritual guide of the queen, who conducts the entire plot. The other play deals with the love of King Vidyādharamalla for a princess who comes to his palace dressed as a boy. Mṛgāṅkavallī comes as Mṛgāṅkavarman. It is the minister Bhāgurāyaṇa who conducts this plot, which has the usual secret meetings, dreams and the statue. The queen, seeking revenge on the king, marries him to the 'boy', but the king gets the girl he wants by this marriage. Rajasekhara copies great writers, but fails to achieve much.

Bodhayana. The *Bhagavadajjukīya* (The Ascetic and the Courtesan, 1925) by Bodhāyana (4th century) is a remarkable *Prahasana*. Śāṇḍilya, a student, while studying in a garden with his teacher, a Buddhist saint, is distracted by the sight of a courtesan, Ajjukā, and is drawn to her. Ajjuka is bitten by a serpent. The student, in spite of the warnings of his teacher, goes to her rescue, only to find her dead. To impress his student with his own yogic greatness, the Bhagavān makes his soul enter the body of Ajjuka. Meanwhile, the servants of Yama discover that they have by mistake taken the soul of Ajjuka and come back to replace it in her body, only to find it already occupied by another. Finding the body of the Bhagavan vacant, they place her soul in it. When the body of Ajjuka with the soul of the saint is resurrected, she begins to talk philosophy to the discomfort of the student, who then goes back to the Bhagavan. But the Bhagavan now possesses the soul of the woman and, so, talks of love. The student is perplexed. There is satire and humour of superior taste in this charming play whose style is simple.

Kṣemeśvara's (10th century) *Caṇḍa-kauśika* deserves notice not only for its presentation of the story of Harischandra in five acts, but also for its being a tragedy in the Greek sense. He is, perhaps, the only dramatist to follow Bhasa in this regard, ignoring the rules prescribed by the dramaturgists.

Irregular Types of Sanskrit Drama

The *Dūtāṅgada* (Angada, A Messenger, 1891) of Subhaṭa (13th century) the *Mahānāṭaka* of Hanumat, the *Rāmābhyudaya* (Rama's Well-being) and the *Pāṇḍavābhyudaya*

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(Pandavas Well-being) of Rāmadeva Vyāsa (15th century), and the *Ānandalatika* are small plays, like one-act plays, in two or three scenes. It has been suggested that these plays are the *Chāyā-nāṭakas* (shadow-plays). The *Mahānāṭaka*, attributed to Hanumat, is also to be included in this group, although it is more extensive and intricate than the others. It deals with the Rama story and has little or no dialogue, no prologue and no plot as such. It has two recensions: one by Dāmodara Miśra in 14 acts and a later one by Madhusūdana in 10 acts.

Prabodhacandrodaya (The Rise of the Moon of Wisdom) is the first allegorical play in Sanskrit. It is said that the author, Krishnamishra (11th century) wrote this play to inculcate the philosophical doctrines in one of his disciples. The characters in it are Mahāmoha, the King of Benares, and his attendants, Faults and Vices. Religion and Reason, accompanied by all virtues, are banished from the kingdom. But with the help of Faith and Wisdom, the Good wins over Evil. Krishnamisra was followed by Vedantadeśika (12th century), who makes the theme of his *Samkalpasūryodaya* (Imaginary Sunrise) favourable to the Viśiṣṭādvaita philosophy. Other allegorical plays following this pattern are *Mohaparājaya* (The Defeat of Love) by Yaśahpāla (14th century), *Vidyāpariṇaya* by Ānandarāyamakhin (18th century) and *Śivaliṅgasūryodaya* of Mallāri Ārādhya (18th century).

Among later writers and plays, mention should be made of Vatsarāja (1163–1203), minister of Paramardideva of Kālañjara, who has written six plays to illustrate the *rūpaka* forms, *Vyāyoga*, *Samavakāra*, *Īhāmṛga*, *Bhāṇa* and *Prahasana*. His plays, *Kirātārjunīya Vyāyoga*, *Samudramathana* (The Churning of the Sea), *Rukmiṇīharaṇa* (Abduction of Rukmini), *Tripuradāha*, *Karpūracarita* and *Hāsyacūḍāmaṇī* are noteworthy, not for their quality, but as forms. Kulasekhara (12th century), a Kerala prince wrote the *Tāpatīsamvaraṇa* (1911) and *Subhadrādhanañjaya* (1912), two delightful plays dealing with popular stories. Ravivarman (1265–?), another Kerala prince wrote *Pradyumnābhyudaya* (The Rise of Pradyumna), which deals with the story of Pradyumna and Prabhāvatī. It is a play that reveals restraint and fine taste in its composition. The *Āścaryacūḍāmaṇi* by Shaktibhadra (9th century) is a play wherein the crest-jewel provides the means of recognition in the Rama story. The episodes from the Ramayana have not been well-knit in it and the play is mediocre. The *Tāpasavatsarāja* (The Ascetic Vatsaraja) by Anaṅgaharṣa Mātṛrāja or Mayūrāja deals with the Udayna theme. There is in it some fine poetry, but the play as a whole does not impress.

Works on dramaturgy refer to many plays which are not available, but which appear to have been good *Prakaraṇas*. Such a survey as this cannot refer to all the plays and some have to be left out. The *Kaumudīmahotsava* (The Festival of the Moon) by Vijjakā (7th century) however deserves notice, being a pleasant play by a woman playwright.

The decadent Sanskrit drama begins from Murari and Rajasekhara. The later centuries have produced plays which are really nothing more than attempts to dramatize the epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana or some incidents from them. But these plays lack quality, dramatic power and characterization. Plays such as the *Prasannarāghava* of Jayadeva (13th century) and the *Unmattarāghava* of Bhāskara (14th century) may be taken as illustrations of this age. The playwrights chose themes from the epics and dealt with them in the manner of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti or Harsha. But imitations cannot always produce great plays.

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Sindhi

HARI KANT JETHWANI

Before the advent of an organized theatre in Sind, musical narration of heroic tales by *Chārans* and *Bhatts* (court entertainers), *Bhagat*, an old form of story-telling accompanied by dance and songs and narration by *Ghālhiars* (story-tellers) used to be the main source of popular entertainment. In addition some *Rāmlīlā* troupes, mostly from Central India used to visit Sind to perform Ramlila.

It can be said, with some reservations, that *Chārans* *Bhatts*, *Bhagats* and *Ghālhiars* were the forerunners of the later drama as they not only narrated stories involving a number of characters, but also performed various roles, in a one-man-show style, with dialogues, songs and histrionics.

However, Sindhi drama in the real sense is hardly a century old. Before it came into existence in the last quarter of the 19th century, a number of Bombay-based commercial Parsee and Gujarati drama companies visited frequently big cities of Sind. Their performances helped to create interest in the theatre. Prominent among them were Victoria, Alfred Gaiety, Khatau and Wankaner. What they staged concerned mostly subjects like mythology and mystery as also Shakespeare's tragedies. The performances had their impact on the local audience and as a result of this impact some indigenous commercial drama companies came into existence, the leading ones being the *Jamadār* (Hyderabad Butchers' Drama Group), the *Jamīlā* and the *Rāzal*. The last two were owned and managed by two professional women and the companies were named after their own names. These women played the female roles in their productions drawing huge audiences. Agha Hasan Ali's (Āghā Hasan Alī) popular opera Indra Sabha and Urdu mystery plays of Agha Hashar (Āghā Hashar) and Master Rehmat (Reḥmat) were the favourites of these audiences.

Early Period (1880–1920)

The Age of Translations and Adaptations. Mirza Qalich Beg (Mirzā Qalīc Beg, 1853–1929) wrote the first Sindhi play—*Lailā-Majnā*—in 1880. Borrowing heavily on a romantic Arabian folk-story for the requirements of his raw material, Mirza composed the play in *dohra* (couplet) form. The play, however, could not be staged owing to the absence of a drama organization. Five years later, in 1885, Mirza Qalich Beg came out with his second play—*Khurṣīd* rendering of a Gujarati play. Prof. M. U. Malkani in his book *Sindhi Nasur ji Tarikh* (History of Sindhi Prose), however, says that the author of the play was inspired by an Urdu play *Zar Kharīd Khurṣīd*, presented by the Parsee Victoria Drama Company in Bombay which Mirza had seen while he was a student of Elphinstone College there. Written in half-rhymed prose with catchy lyrics, the play depicted the life of a brave and independent woman, who, wisely, freed herself from the clutches of fake lovers, and ultimately found her mate. *Khurṣīd* was published by the Government Book Depot, Karachi in 1887. In its preface, Mirza claimed that his intention for writing this play was merely to spare the reader, or the audience, of the illusions involved in fairy-tales and give them something with relevance to the modern times. It took two decades to put the play on the production line when it was finally staged by the Hyderabad Pleaders' Club in 1905.

In 1888, Diwan Kauromal Chandanmal Khilnani (Dīvān Kauromal Candanmal Khilnāṇī, 1844–1916) translated Harsha Deva's Sanskrit play *Ratnāvalī*, a love story of an Indian king and a princess of Lanka. This was the first translation of a Sanskrit play in Sindhi. Prof. L. H. Ajwani commented on the translation thus: 'It can scarcely be called a happy translation and all that can be said in extenuation of some of the crude and frankly sexual passages in the book is that Kauromal was not equal to the task of rendering the nuances of Sanskrit drama and poetry into a prose barely thirty years old' (*History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 181).

Mirza Qalich Beg wrote three more plays in quick succession—*Bakāvali* (1894), *Nūr Jehān* (1896) and *Nādir-shāh* (1897). The first one was a romantic play and the other two were historical. All the three plays were published by Hari Singh, a publisher in Sukkur.

The development of Sindhi drama got a boost with the establishment of the Dayaran Jethmal Sindh College Amateur Dramatic Society in Karachi in 1894. The Society was an offshoot of ceaseless efforts of the British Principal, Dr Jackson and the Parsee Vice-Principal, B. J. Padshah. In its twenty-three years of existence from 1894 to 1917, the society presented about fifteen plays and provided an anchorage for Sindhi drama. The society was a pioneer in stage production and proved to be a model for all subsequent attempts at drama production and playwriting. According to M. U. Malkani, who was the last Secretary of the Society, the first play staged by them was that of Master Jethanand's *Nal-Damyanti* (1894), adapted from one of the episodes of Mahabharata. The Ramayana and Mahabharata and Shakespeare's plays furnished raw material for the earlier playwrights. *Hariścandra* by Lilaram Singh was staged in 1895–96. *Rāmāyaṇa* by the same writer

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was staged in 1898. A section of *Rāmāyaṇa* was staged under the title of *Rām Banwās* (The Exile of Rama) by Deoomal in 1897. Plays on social themes were *Mohan Tārka* and *Sūrjan Rādhā* in 1895 by Lilaram Singh. Except in the first play, musical score was provided as part of the plays.

Mirza Qalich Beg remained the most prolific playwright for the Society. Beginning with the rendering of Kalidas' *Śākuntala* in 1896, he switched to Shakespeare's plays and adapted *The Merchant of Venice* (*Husna Dildar*, 1897), *King Lear* (Shah Elia, 1900), *Cymbeline* (*Shamshād Marjāna*, 1908), *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*Azīz, Ain Sharīf*, 1909), *Romeo and Juliet* (*Gulzār Ain Gulnār*, 1909), *Hamlet* (*Shahzādo Bahrām*, 1914) and *As You Like It* (*Jamshed Hamidah*, 1918).

During his forty years of active writing, Mirza Qalich Beg composed as many as sixteen full-length plays apart from a number of comic pieces and farces. Mirza was well-versed not only in his own language but in Persian, English, Hindi and other Indian languages as well. The versatility in the languages proved to be a great asset to him in his rendering of plays from other languages. In most of his renderings, Mirza not only changed the names of the characters but also set them in Sindhi environs thereby making the audience feel at home even with the subjects foreign to them. His last play *Mohinī* (1924), based on the Urdu play *Shrimati Manjarī*, preached Hindu-Muslim unity.

Along with the D. J. Sindh College Amateur Dramatic Society, some other amateur drama organizations in various parts of Sind, provided impetus to drama writing. Gagansingh Atmasingh Advani (Gāgansingh Ātmāsingh Āḍvāṇi) wrote *Shakuntala-Dushyant* (1898) for Dharma Upkar Amateur Dramatic Society, Shikarpur. Diwan Thakurdas Nagwani, the moving spirit of the Society, came out with two plays—*Chandrāvalī* and *Triyā Charitra* (Triya Caritra, 1914), the second one based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Jethanand Bhiryai's (Jeṭhānand Bhiryāī) *Nal-Damyantī* was staged again by the Hyderabad Pleaders' Club in 1908. Kishanchand Tirthdas Khatri 'Bewas' (Kishancand Tirthdas Khatri 'Bevas', 1885–1947), leader of the new school of Sindhi poetry adapted Agha Hashar's two Urdu plays *Khūbsūrat-Balā* (Beautiful Snake) in 1907 and *Bilwāmaṅgal* in 1908. 'Bewas' also rendered *Rājā Hariścandra* (1909), *Draupadi*, *Prit Pūjārīṇ*, *Manohar Nāngiṇ*, *Hār Jīt* and *Shaka Jo Shikār*, all for the Chandka Amateur Dramatic Society, Larkana. Nanikram Dharamdas (Nānikrām Dharamdās) wrote *Farebi Fitna* (1914), based on Marie Corelli's *Vendetta*, *Nek Anjaam* (1916) based on the Urdu drama *Khwāb-i-Hastī* and *Patī Shevā* (1920) based on the English play *Silver King*. These dramas were written for and staged by the Hyderabad Amateur Dramatic Society. Nanikram's last and perhaps the best play was *Prem bhaktī* (1923), translation of Agha Hashar's Urdu play *Bilwāmaṅgal*. Although it had an old theme—the problem of prostitution—it had its social relevance and was given a masterly treatment.

None of these dramatic societies could attain success comparable to that of the D. J. Sindh College Amateur Dramatic Society. The only exception was the Rabindra Literary and Dramatic Club, jointly founded by Khanchand Daryani and M. U. Malkani. Rabindranath Tagore presided over its inaugural function in Hyderabad Sind. The Club played a great role in the course of its short career (1923–31) to produce some worthwhile dramas.

Middle Period (1920–47)

The Age of Realism and Social Struggle. Political awakening and social awareness generated by the events in and outside the country, Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal, Morley-Minto Reforms, and the Russian Revolution, found their echo in the later literary creations. The taste of the readers and the audience changed. Sindhi playwrights no more searched history or looked to religion for inspiration. Instead, they turned their eyes towards their surroundings and found themselves amidst heaps of dramatic material hitherto ignored.

Khanchand Daryani (Khāncand Daryāṇī) played a leading role in giving Sindhi drama a new direction. He was the first playwright who chose socio-economic and national themes for his plays. Very rightly called the pioneer of the modern full-length plays, Daryani (1898–1965) wrote and adapted over two dozen plays on social themes within a short span of time. He came into prominence about the year 1923 with two plays dealing with social problems, *Gulāb Jo Gul* (Rose Flower, 1920) and *Motie Ji Mukhṛī* (Jasmine Bud, 1923), showing the conflict between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law—and earned popular acclaim due to the subject having direct relevance to society. His earlier play was *Ghalat Fahmī* (Misunderstanding) in 1920 based on Mrs Henry Wood's *East Lynn*. *Zamīndārī Zulm* (Tyranny of Landlords, 1927), *Maya Jo Andh* (Spell of Wealth, 1928) and *Bukha Jo Shikār* (Victim of Hunger, 1932) were some of the popular plays which depict the class conflict. In the first play, the conflict is between the landlords and the peasants, in the second it is between mill-owners and labourers, while the third play portrays the conflict between the rich and the poor. In another play *Mulka Ja Mudbar* (1923) adapted from Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*, Daryani exposed the evils of class distinction in society and portrayed the downfall of capitalism. *Desh Tān Sadqe* (Sacrifice at the Altar of the Country, 1927), derived from the Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck's *Monna Vanna*, was also among his plays successfully staged by the Tagore Club. Although most of Daryani's plays were quite successful with the audience, they hardly earned literary acclaim.

M. U. Malkani (M. U. Malkāṇī, 1896–1980) is yet another

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prominent playwright of this period. His first play *Kismet* (1923) was an adaptation from Knoblock's English play of the same title followed by *Ektā Jo Ālāp* (Idyll of Unity, 1929) from Zangwill's *Melting Pot* in which Malkani, through its adaptation, sought to deal with the problem of untouchability in accordance with the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. His *Khina Ji Khaṭa* (1930), based on a film story, depicted the consequences of nympholepsy. *Anārkalī* (1930) narrated the romanticized historical tale of prince Saleem and Anarkali, daughter of a commoner, during the Mughal period. Malkani is, however, better known as the founder of one-act plays in Sindhi and he is further discussed in the appropriate section.

Lekhraj Kishanchand 'Aziz' (Lekhrāj Kishincand 'Azīz', 1905–71), the master poet, also wrote three good plays. His historical play *Kumār Ajīt Singh* (1931), social satire *Mr Majnū* (1933) and *Garībān Mār* (Oppression of the Poor, 1951), portraying conflict between landlords and landless tillers, were highly acclaimed for their brilliant treatment and powerful language.

Muhammad Ismail Ursani (Muhammad Ismāīl Ursāṇī, b. 1906) in his *Badnasīb Tharī* (1942) portrayed the sufferings of a poor Thari (inhabitant of the Thar Desert) at the hands of corrupt officials. The play presented a pleasant example of Thari dialect and speech.

Dramatization of Folk Stories

It is generally believed that the dramatization of Sindhi folk stories was started by Lalchand Amardinomal Jagitiani (Lālcand Amarḍinomal Jagtiāṇī, 1885–1954) but this view is contrary to the historical facts. In fact Khanchand Daryani, pioneer of social dramas, with his *Mūmal Mendhro* paved the way for such experiments. However, *Mūmal Mendhro* published by Sindhi Sahitya Society in 1922 could not be staged till 1928. Before that Lalchand Amardinomal's *Umar Māruī* was successfully staged by the Tagore Club, Hyderabad in 1925. Written in chaste prose and interspersed with Shah Abdul Latif's most popular verses, *Umar Māruī* was equally appreciated on the stage as also in the literary circles. Lalchand and Dingo Thadhani wrote another play based on Sindhi folk theme, *Suhṇī Mehār* (1939), but it did not come up to the standard expected.

Lilaram Pherwani's (Līlārām Phervāṇī) *Hika Rāt* (1936) based on another Sindhi folk-tale *Līlā Canesar* was also a successful play of the period. Its dialogues in lilting Shikarpuri dialect had a poetic impact on the audience. Ram Panjwani followed this tradition of using folk-tales as raw material for playwriting. His *Mūmal Rāṇo* (1941) and *Pakhan Men Padminī* (1943) earned moderate success on stage. Nanikram Dharamdas' *Suhṇī Mehār* published posthumously in 1946 was the last play in this series.

Modern Period (from 1947)

With the Independence of India and the erstwhile province of Sind going away to Pakistan, Sindhi dramatic activity came to a standstill for nearly a decade. Goverdhan Mehboobani 'Bharati' (Goverdhan Mehbūbāni Bhārati, b. 1929) gave the first full-length play after the partition. His social melodrama *Bigriyal Ghar* (Divided House, 1959) with some song and dance sequences (an imitation of commercial cinema) was staged by the Sindhu Samaj, Delhi, in 1960. The material of the play had an immediate relevance to contemporary Sindhi society. The dowry system and the conflicts between the orthodox and progressive views on the problem of juvenile delinquency were dealt with a zealous reformist approach. Sheela, the working girl, had to support a good-for-nothing family comprising a sick widowed mother, a brother gone astray and a sister dreaming of a career in films. A family friend (Sheela's lover) comes to their rescue, solves all their problems and restores harmony in the house.

There are no professional playwrights in Sindhi and a number of original plays remain unpublished and even unstaged. However, in the course of the last three decades, not more than a dozen original full-length plays have been written in Sindhi.

Hari Kant's (Hari Kānt Jethwāṇī, b. 1935) social satire *Mūkhe Kunwār Khape* (Wanted a Bride, 1964) is the story of a status-conscious bachelor officer in search of a perfect bride and his greedy mother unwilling to compromise on the question of dowry. Their conflicting choices lead them nowhere and circumstances compel them to compromise in the end.

Rāt Hik Ṭūfān Ji (A Stormy Night, 1967) by Moti Prakash portrays a honest young engineer blackmailed by a corrupt contractor due to the weakness of his beautiful young wife. His small occasional favours shown to the contractor result in the defective construction of the dam which ultimately brings disaster. The latest original full-length play is Ram Panjwani's *Āyo Nao Zamāno* (Here Come the New Times, 1978). It is a pointer to the disintegration of the joint family system due to the desire of the younger generation to be independent and to enjoy a frivolous irresponsible life-style. The elders' place, they feel, is in the Homes for the Aged —forsaken and uncared for. The modern young men do not brook any interference or advice from the elders in their daily affairs and any such attempt is resisted by insults and in many cases by pushing their elders out of their own homes. The play has celebrated its silver jubilee on stage in less than three years.

In the absence of a sufficient number of original plays and to meet the demand of the theatre, Sindhi writers have of late turned to successful plays of other languages. Moti Prakash started the vogue with Romesh Mehta's *Under-Secretary* in the early sixties.

Poet Vasdev Nirmal, Producer-Director Ramesh Janani and Jivan Gursahani, seasoned stage actor Hemraj Nagwani and others have recently translated or adapted a number of

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plays from Marathi, Gujarati, Hindi and other Indian languages.

With a view to preserving the cultural heritage of Sind, some Sindhi playwrights sought out popular folk-tales. Ram Panjwani gave capsule dramatizations of seven folk romances of Sind. Goverdhan Mehboobani 'Bharati' and Motilal Jotwani gave longer versions of some of them. Arjan 'Shad' rendered one of the tales in verse-drama *Ḍāhiyūn Ḍukha Ḍisan* (The Clever Women Suffer, 1958), Laxman Bhatia Komal gave three of them in the form of opera. All these were attempts at retelling the tales. But none of them tried to reinterpret or so fashion these tales as to make them relevant to the present times.

One-Act Plays. Social evils like dowry and alcoholism prompted some reformist organizations in Hyderabad to arrange the informal staging of mini-plays called *Cahciṭā* in street corners, gardens and even on shop terraces, with audience watching the performance from the main bazaar. Organizations like *Ḍetī Letī Mandlī*, *Ās Jī Tolī* and *Bande Mātram* did the spadework in popularizing mini-plays which, in course of time, developed into one-act plays.

As in the case of full-length dramas, here also Mirza Qalich Beg gave the lead. His first one-act play *Lobhī Ain Ṭhogī* (The Greedy and The Swindler) was staged after the main play *Hariścandra* in 1894 by the D. J. Sindh College Amateur Dramatic Society. His best one-act play was *Inquiry Officer* (1896) based on Gogol's well known Russian play *The Inspector General*, followed by a number of social satires and farcical one-act plays including *Nīm Tabīb Khatre Jān* (The Quack is Dangerous to Life), *Nīm Mullah Khatre Īmān* (The False Priest is Dangerous to Religion, 1897), *Rassāīa Jo Rang* and *Gaṣt Kīna Kaṣṭ* (1908).

Other prominent one-act playwrights of the first quarter of the century included Kauromal Khilnani, Lilaramsingh, Lalchand Amardinomal Jagtiani and Kishanchand 'Bewas'. Apart from social themes, Lalchand wrote quite a few plays on national themes too. Although most of the plays written during the period were original, the playwrights lacked artistic approach and indulged in the delivery of sermons of chosen ideals or devoted themselves to light humour. In their eagerness to reform society, they ignored sophistication and preached morality.

However, later writers adopted a different attitude to the one-act plays. M. U. Malkani starting with full-length plays, switched over to one-act plays and wrote more than two dozen such plays between 1931 and 1947. He established himself firmly as a one-act playwright with his *Panj Nandhā Nāṭak* (Five Small Plays, 1937) and *Pangatī Pardā* (Social Plays, 1938). Malkani followed Bernard Shaw in producing 'plays pleasant' and 'plays unpleasant'. His *Tea Party* in the first volume, which is a humorous exposure of the vain effort of the hosts or hostesses in a tea-party to appear affluent and important in society, has been very popular. So also *The Ladies Club*, a one-act play in the second volume which is reminiscent of Sheridan's *School for Scandal*. *Prēm Jī Sejā* (Love Bed) presents a woman confessing on the death-bed that the child born to her is not her husband's. In flashback, the play brings out how the indelicate approach of her husband to sex used to leave the woman frigid. Quite a few of Malkani's plays became a subject of hot discussion for the obscenity that is never quite stated.

Jethanand Nagrani (Jethānand Nāgrāṇī) earned popularity for his *Gāmṭū* (fake) series of one-act plays. His *Gāmṭū Doctor*, *Gāmṭū MLA*, *Gāmṭū Editor*, *Gāmṭū Vakil*, etc. exposed one or the other social evil in a rather lighter vein. He has all along stuck to the motto—laugh and the world laughs with you.

After Independence, Sindhi theatre started limping back to activity only at the places where Sindhis were settled in sizeable numbers. Amateur dramatic societies of various Sindhi educational institutions at Delhi, Bombay and Ajmer started staging one-act plays around 1950.

Jeewan Gursahani in Delhi and Das Talib and Gobind Malhi in Bombay gave the lead to the post-partition theatrical activity. Jeewan Gursahani wrote and directed *Ḍetī Letī* (Dowry, 1950), *Fashionable* (1952), *Kāko Bahlaṇia Wāro* (Uncle from Bahlaṇia, 1954), *Neelam* (1958) and *Marriage Bureau* for Delhi audience. Das Talib's collection of one-act plays *Adhīn* (Subservient, 1951) encouraged dramatic activity in Bombay. Gobind Malhi wrote *Kafan* (Shroud, 1958), *Nimmi* (1959), *Gustākhī Māf* (Impertinence May be Excused, 1959), *Ghoṭ Kunwār Rāzī* (Happy Couples, 1960), *Tūn Bi Rahu Mān Bi Rahān* (You Stay, I too Will Stay, 1960), *Jahin Ḍ'iye Mein Tel Konhe* (A Lamp Empty of Oil, 1961), *Mehmān* (Guest, 1961) and *Juhū je Kināre* (On the Bank of Juhu, 1962) mainly for Bombay audience.

Chinese aggression of India in 1962 inspired Sindhi playwrights to write a couple of plays on the subject. They are Hari *Kant's Ākhir Jīt Asānji* (The Ultimate Victory is Ours) and Gobind Malhi's *Tunhinjo So Munhinjo* (Yours is Mine).

Hari Kant's other popular one-act plays include *Makān Khālī Āhe* (House to Let, 1963), *Ḍ'inhan Jā Sapnā* (Day Dreams, 1963) *Koī Achṇo Āhe* (Somebody is Coming, 1964) and *Bus Stop Te* (At the Bus Stop, 1976.) *Makān Khālī Āhe* has celebrated a century on the stage.

A remarkable aspect of the post-partition Sindhi plays has been that they have not been unduly influenced by any particular school of political philosophy or discipline. They have remained free from the influence of Marxist slogan mongering as also of Freudian fancies. The main subjects which preoccupied the Sindhi playwrights' mind were difficulties of camp life, nostalgia for the lost homeland, Sindhi folk-tales, broad nationalism and international issues like world peace and universal brotherhood.

With two main cultural centres of Sindhis—Delhi and

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Bombay—having bade farewell to one-act plays, Ahmedabad has of late become active in this field. The Sindhi Drama Workshop established by a band of young enthusiasts headed by Prem Prakash has broken new ground through its experimental plays.

Sindhi Stage. Sindhi stage, in the course of nearly a hundred years of its existence, has undergone a great change for betterment in the recent past. Starting with wooden planks and bedsheets as its sole props a century ago, the Sindhi stage now has everything which make a modern theatre. Apart from having the latest theatre equipment it now has a number of trained hands to handle specialized sections like production, direction, acting, etc.

A number of amateur dramatic organizations, with their frequent performance of standard plays, have encouraged theatre-going in the community. A few of them are Kalakar Mandal (1958), Sindhu Kala Mandir (1960), Sindhu Art Theatre (1965) and Sindhu Kala Niketan (1965) in Bombay, Sindhu Kala Sangam (1961) and Mehran in Delhi. In addition, Akhil Bharat Sindhi Boli Ain Sahitya Sabha's annual drama competitions have widened the scope of dramatic activity covering new places like Calcutta, Nagpur, Baroda, Bhopal, and Bangalore.

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Tamil

V. RAMASUBRAMANIAM (AUNDY)

The Early Period

The concept of the Tamil muse simultaneously inspiring poetry, music and drama (*iyal, isai, nāṭakam*) is older than the poetry of the Sangham age and may date back to the centuries before Christ. Later references indicate that this concept of drama also included dance. The occurrence in *Tolkāppiyam* of such technical terms as *nāṭakam* (drama), *nāṭaka vaḷakku* (dramatic convention), *ulakiyal vaḷakku* (naturalism) and of the names and descriptions of the eight major emotions and physical expressions (*meyppāḍu*) is a pointer to Tolkappiyar's acquaintance with a wide range of dramatic poetry. There is also the positive and significant assertion of Aḍiyārkkunallār, in his prefatory commentary on the *Śilappadhikāram*, that the 'Nāṭakat-Tamil' treatise by Bharata has been lost. But despite all these indications of there having been Tamil drama in centuries past, there exists the curious negative phenomenon of the absence of any original piece of drama in the entire range of ancient Tamil literature up to the end of the first millennium after Christ.

Elements of Drama in Early Literature. The *Puṟanānūṟu* 29 reads: 'In this world of things which appear, move about and pass away in due order, like the characters assumed by the actors at a festival, may your kith and kin have lasting joy; and may the treasures under your care and protection attain lasting peace!' (tr.) We have, in this passage, a reference to several elements of drama—characters, costume, make-up, gesture, action and stage entries and exits.

In another passage, cited by Naccinārkkiṅiyar in his

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commentary on 'Poruḷ-Adhikāram' of *Tōlkāppiyam* (sūtra, 67), the colophon reads: 'This is the speech, of Ponmuḍiyār and Ariśil Kilār, when they were asked by the Cheraman to describe how his army suffered defeat.' A long poetic speech by two persons (poets) simultaneously is uncommon in actual life, but convention permits it (duet) in dramatic performances on the stage. Commentators and colophonists often fail to indicate the distinction between panegyrist-poets and literary characters, when they extract passages from poems. It seems quite clear that this particular passage was recited by two performing actors to entertain a group of spectators. The commentator quotes the passage as an illustration of *nāṭaka vaḷakku* in contradistinction to *ulakiyal vaḷakku*.

Śilambu Nāṭakam and Kamba Nāṭakam. In a thought-provoking chapter titled Kamba Nāṭakam, in his book *Nāṭaka-k-Kāppiyaṅgaḷ* (1966), T. P. Meenakshisundaram rightly emphasizes the view that in early Tamil literature no distinction was made between the art of epic poetry (*toḍar-nilai-c-ceyyuḷ*) and that of dramatic poetry (*nāṭakat-tamiḷ*) as far as basic content (*poruḷ*) was concerned. He declares (p. 112): 'Tamilians cherish Ilango Adikal's *Śilappadhikāram* as a dramatic poem. The Ramayana of Kambar too possesses this distinction of being styled *Kamba Nāṭakam* . . . .' In the first hundred pages of this book the author describes over a hundred dramatic situations from *Śilappadhikāram* that could be enacted as playlets.

All these extracts confirm the surmise that the absence of drama in ancient Tamil literature was but a voluntary choice of the Tamilian mind, which highlighted presentational theatricalism (*nāṭaka vaḷakku*) in aesthetics and bypassed representational naturalism (*ulakiyal vaḷakku*). It discarded the form of 'Total Dialogue' and opened its doors to narration and description. That is why mime and gesture (*abhinaya*) with hands, eyes and body survive even today in the modernized versions of *Kathakaḷi* and *Bharatanāṭyam*.

International Provenance of Śilappadhikāram. The ancient Tamil aestheticians cherished *Śilappadhikāram* as their National Drama. No verbal analysis of ancient Tamil psychology can equal in effect even a simple narration of the synopsis of this remarkable dramatic poem.

Kovalan, a merchant-prince of Puhār, the seaport-capital of the ancient Cholas, neglects his wife, Kannaki and lives for 14 years with a courtesan danseuse, Madhavi, losing all his wealth over the years. In poverty, he begins to suspect the fidelity of the courtesan and returns to his spouse, who offers him her anklet to sell. Ashamed of his penury, he decides to sell the anklet in Madurai, and they both leave Puhar unobserved. After a journey on foot for 70 days, they arrive in Madurai, the Pandiyan capital. Leaving Kannaki in the hut of a hospitable cowherd in the suburbs, Kovalan goes to the city to sell the gold anklet (*śilambu*). A wily goldsmith of the Pandiyan Court, falsely accuses him of having stolen the *śilambu* from the Pandiyan queen's palace and gets Kovalan summarily executed without trial. Hearing the terrible news, Kannaki rushes to see her husband's severed body at the place of execution. She then goes to the king's palace to demand justice. She produces her other anklet and points out to the Pandya monarch its unique design and contents of gems (contrasting it against the queen's own). She thus proves the innocence of her husband. The shocked monarch falls in a fatal swoon and his equally remorseful queen follows suit. The irate Kannaki, her anger not appeased, plucks out her left breast and throws it at the city, which catches fire at once and burns. Proceeding westwards towards the hills of the Chera land, she arrives at a holy *vēṅgai* tree. A celestial chariot, carrying her husband's disembodied spirit, now appears and she steps into it, whereupon she and the chariot vanish. Senguttuvan, the Chera monarch, is induced by his Queen to erect for Kannaki a shrine in his capital, Vanji. Fetching a stone of appropriate quality from the Himalayas to carve her image for worship, he celebrates Kannaki's consecration as a *Pattini Dēvi*. Speaking through another possessed devotee, the spirit of Kannaki blesses the Chera king and his younger brother, Ilango Adikal, the author of the poem.

An old colophon (*Urai peṟu kaṭṭurai*) appended to it, informs us that 'the greatness of the *Pattini* cult had crossed national boundaries and prompted the Pandiya, Chola, Simhala and Malava kings to build similar temples' for the worship of the poem's heroine.

Śilappadhikāram has also left its impress on Sanskrit drama. Parallel plot motifs occur in *Mṛccakaṭika* (The Clay Cart), the famous tragi-comedy of King Sudraka. There are enough internal evidences in this work to suggest its South Indian origin. These parallel episodes and character-types indicate that one drew its plot-material from the other: the merchant-princes Charudatta and Kovalan, fallen in fortune but not nobility; the incorruptible and faithful courtesans Vasantasena and Madhavi; their respective avaricious mothers; the *pativratās* Dhūta and Kaṇṇaki; the villainous Śakāra and the equally villainous goldsmith; the allegations of theft of costly jewellery made against the two honourable heroes; the capital punishments awarded to both; and the historical nucleus of a change of political regimes and dynasties at the penultimate stage before the denouement. The colloquy between the two executioners in both plots, quoting almost identical passages from the same old 'Treatise on the Art of Stealing', confirms this surmise. The tragic miscarriage of justice in a law court, due to circumstantial evidence, is sophisticatedly depicted in the Sanskrit *Mṛccakaṭika*. In striking contrast is the crude disregard for even the rudiments of a trial process in the great Neduncheḷiyan's court at Madurai. This is probably

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enough to surmise that the Sanskrit dramatist lived long after the Tamil author.

Drama of Kō-p-Peruñcōḷan. There are many dramatic 'dialogues' in the Sangham anthologies. The unique history of Kō-p-Peruñcoḷan is one of them. The old king, disgusted by the fratricidal tendencies of his two sons—Neḍuṅkiḷḷi and Nalaṅkiḷḷi—each claiming succession to the throne, resolves to starve himself to death. Many courtiers, friends and learned people join him in sympathetic fasts. The old Chola ruler welcomes them all to his fatal ritual, but sends back home one unmarried young admirer, advising him to return after completing his 'householder-stage' (*grhasthāśrama*) of life. The young man obeys and stands apart weeping. As the recalcitrant princes do not relent, the king and his starving admirers die one after the other, each receiving statues and memorial stones in posthumous honour. Years later, the rejected young man too turns up, after seeing the faces of his offspring, and dies as his elders before him. He too is honoured by a memorial stone. Since the story of the later activities of the rival princes is continued in several other selected pieces of *Puṟanānūṟu*, it is proper to surmise that the whole series of incidents is an integral part of one long dramatic *kāvya*.

The most popular example of an ancient pastoral 'drama' is the quasi-religious allegory, *Vaḷḷik-kūttu*, sparkling through the misty 'Erotics' of the older *Kuravai*, *Vāri* and *Puri Pāḍal*. Valli, the beautiful maiden daughter of a hunter guards the family-farm assisted by her girlfriend, both provided with slings and catapults to scare away swarms of marauding birds. A wandering minstrel foretells her imminent marriage with another sharpshooter. She walks away chiding the soothsayer and vowing she would wed none but Muruga, the Divine Lord of the Hilly Region. The all-merciful God takes human shape as a hunter and courts her. She rejects him not knowing the real identity of the suitor, but he pursues her as a bangle-seller, and is again rejected. In his third attempt as a decrepit old wonder-working hermit, threatening to crush her under the feet of a mad elephant, she relents. Her frustration, however, is short-lived as the Lord reveals Himself in his Divine form. Its plot is patterned after the guidelines prescribed in the chapter on 'Love Clandestine' occurring in the 'Poṟuḷ-Adhikāram' of *Tōlkāppiyam*, and *Iraiyanār Ahapporuḷ*. *Kuravai* is an ancient drama form (*Kuravaik-kūttu*) danced by eight men and women holding hands to form a circle. *Vāri* is the text of a type of song of a dance called *Vārik-kūttu*. *Puri Pāḍal* is an anthology of the texts of the songs of the last period of the Sangham epoch (c. late 4th/5th century A.D.) of which only fragments are available. Their musical modes have not yet been reconstructed by Tamilologists.

The Second Millennium in South India. The mutual nonviolent impacts of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism and the influence of these religions on South Indian culture continued uninterrupted by the bloody Hindu-Muslim wars of the remote North even after A.D. 1000. This was a definite factor responsible for the blossoming of many virile literatures in the languages of peninsular India. One of the offshoots of this was the birth of drama as a genre of Tamil literature.

Birth of True Drama in Tamil

A dramatic poem, *Śri Rāja Rāja Vijayam* is a *kāvya* eulogizing the exploits, achievements and glories of the great Chola Emperor Raja Raja I. Its author appears to have been Narayana Bhattaditya, who is referred to in an inscription as a 'Savarṇa' (an offspring of a Kshatriya female and a Brahmin male).

Another literary work referred to in another inscription is *Rāja-Rājēśvara Nāṭakam*, which was a dramatized version of *Śrī Rāja Rāja Vijayam* enacted in the Brihadisvara Temple (with actors, actresses and musical accompaniment) on special festive days. The donor of the endowment was Rajendra Chola I, son of Raja Raja I. The imperial Cholas appear to have originated a new tradition of dramatizing narrative epic poems and having them enacted within the temple premises for public entertainment.

This surmise receives strong support in Meenakshisundaram's book, *Nāṭaka-k-kāppiyaṅgaḷ*. He provides a few illustrative parallel passages from the original text of the *Kamba Rāmāyaṇa* and another Tamil dramatic piece called *Aṅgadan Dūtu*, the latter being a dramatized version of an episode from Kambar's text. The author says that he is indebted to the late Kavimaṇi Dēśika Vināyakam Piḷḷai, for the information about the existence of a dramatized version of Kambar's Ramayana.

Nothing else is known about the plays written and staged during the next few centuries.

Opera-Type Plays. A large number of opera-type Tamil plays were composed during the post-Vijayanagar epoch of Tamilnadu history. Sekkilar's *Periya Purāṇam* (12th century) and the much later *Tiruviḷaiyāḍal Purāṇam* of Paraṅjyōti Munivar (early 18th century) became rich sources of story-material for dramatists. Temples and courts vied with one another in patronizing pageants and theatrical shows based on stories from these puranas.

Kuṟavañji-nāṭakam was an attempt by a few courtesan-artistes to enact an opera-play. In it, an adolescent heroine and her companion chance to see the decorated image of the deity of a temple being carried in procession. The heroine becomes lovesick and her handmaiden is asked to take a love message to the deity. A gipsy woman, who is a soothsayer (*kuṟavañji*), foretells the union of the maiden with the object of her love. The maiden is soon united with her lover. There are more than a score of such operatic

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ballets, among which is a genuine literary gem, *Tirukkuṭrāla-kkuṟa-vañji* by Tirikūṭa Rājappa-kkavi-rāyar (early 18th century).

Mukkuḍal Paḷḷu nāṭakam (early 18th century) is another type of rural dramatic poem highlighting the life of the agricultural labourers (paḷḷar) of the lowest caste. In this dramatic form, all the songs are sung to accompany the dancers. There are about a score of such *Paḷḷu nāṭakas* in the language, most of which are in praise of a local deity. Their basic story content is about a 'paḷḷan' who works in the fields owned by the temple. He is so much enamoured of his second and younger wife that he neglects his cultivation work. His jealous first wife urges the manager of the temple farm to punish the defaulter. The paḷḷan is tied to a stake. His suffering causes his first wife to relent. She appeals to the manager to release her husband promising to get all the work done. He is released, the work is completed, and there is a good harvest. The two wives quarrel, but are reconciled and live happily together with their husband. The *paḷḷu* is the song for *kōlāṭṭam* games in some parts of Tamilnadu and is still popular.

Noṇḍi-nāṭakam (noṇḍi=lame person) is a type of mono-acted play about a lame villain, who has been miraculously redeemed through his repentance. Many such texts have stage directions concerning their *rāgam* and *tāḷam*.

These traditions continued up to the middle of the 18th century, when there appeared a masterpiece of Tamil musical drama, *Rāma-Nāṭakak-kīrttanai*, a large operatic adaptation of Kambar's epic by Aruṇācala Kavirāyaṟ. This operatic drama was popularized by two musical exponents who were his disciples. Besides possessing considerable musical excellence, it was a storehouse of folk tunes. No wonder it gained immediate fame and is still recognized as a landmark in Tamil theatrical history.

Many similar *Nāṭakak-kīrttanai* compositions naturally followed. They were based on the Mahabharata, the *Skanda purāṇa*, the *Bhāgavata purāṇa* and the *Periya purāṇa*. But the most outstanding composition of this genre was the *Nandanār Carittira-k-kīrttanai* by Gopalakrishna Bharati, a junior contemporary of Tyagaraja Swami.

Nandanār Carittira-k-kīrttanai. Nanda, the pariah, a bonded labourer in the estate of a Brahmin landlord in Thanjavur district is an ardent devotee of Lord Siva. Once, at the famous Siva temple at Tiru-p-puṅgūr, being low-born, he prays standing at a certain distance from the *liṅgam* (stone image). The image of Nandi (bull vehicle of the Lord) before the sanctorum, prevents him from getting a clear view of the Lord. In desperation he pleads to the Lord. Moved by His devotee's single-minded devotion Lord Siva asks Nandi to step aside. The miracle shocks all present there. Later when Nanda expresses a desire to go to Chidambaram for the Ardra festival his master lays down a stipulation. If he cultivates 120 acres of fallow land he may go. The grief-stricken Nanda cries out to Lord Siva and falls down in a stupor. When he wakes up he finds the whole estate cultivated and bursting with ripe corn ready to be harvested. The holy Brahmin falls at the feet of the pariah. Nanda rushes to Chidambaram. The high-priest there, in accordance with a dream he had seen, gets ready to welcome the Lord's fervent devotee. But before that Nanda has to undergo an ordeal of a fire-bath. A frenzied Nanda jumps into the fire-pit and emerges unscathed. Before anybody can approach him, Nanda rushes into the sanctorum and merges, physically, with the Lord in a blinding flash of brilliant light. As an opera in Tamil, it stands unrivalled even now for its simple and popular melodies and inner core of supreme bhakti.

The 19th and 20th Centuries

A Parsee troupe from Bombay staged a play in Madras on the occasion of the visit of Edward, Prince of Wales (later Edward VII of England). This enabled enthusiasts to think of a middle course between *Terukkūttu* (street plays) and the theatrical concepts of the orthodox, highbrow, English-educated school. One Govindasami Rao organized the first dramatic troupe at Thanjavur and his efforts were copied by many. Even an all-woman troupe was organized at Kanchipuram.

All these troupes staged indoor performances forsaking the older open-air theatres. They played in halls having built up stages, with curtains, wings and scenic backgrounds. While in the open-air theatres dialogue was impromptu, in these stage performances were heard for the first time fixed, pre-written scripts of plays. Among such plays, those written by P. Sambandha Mudaliyar (1873–1964) were pre-eminent in the early years of the new Tamil drama.

In 1893 Sambandha Mudaliyar founded the 'Suguṇa Vilāsa Sabhā', a body of eminent public men intent on staging respectable plays. Some of the elite of Madras including V. V. Srinivasa Aiyangar, Ramanujachari and R. Srinivasan, acted in his plays. Sambandha Mudaliyar wrote more than a hundred plays and acted in most of them. His plays were popular both among the elite as well as the masses.

Mudaliyar's plays were put on the boards largely by amateur actors and by educational institutions. He always demanded a nominal copyright fee. The greatest contribution of Sambandha Mudaliyar and founders of similar amateur groups was to confer dignity on the drama and the stage and make educated people feel that their women and children could also go to the theatre.

A few academicians of Travancore and southern Tamilnadu, led by C. V. Chandrasekharan, inspired and patronized the writing and production of several psycho-analytical and socio-revolutionary plays in Tamil, based on the techniques of Ibsen, Shaw and Wilde. The 'Art Expo-

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mental Theatre' of Trivandrum produced several plays, chief of them being Aundy's *Māṅgalyam* (1927), which was staged by amateurs in the thirties in Quilon, Trivandrum, Nagercoil, Madurai, Madras, Calcutta, Rangoon and Kuala Lumpur.

In *Māṅgalyam* motherless Kamala, a girl of 10, is wedded to a boy of 12. When she comes of age, she discovers his epileptic idiocy as well as his impotency, but gradually reconciles herself to her fate. Her father now marries again. This enrages her father-in-law who feels that Kamala is being cheated of her inheritance. He arranges another marriage for his son, but through the intervention of the Dewan Peishkar of the state and through the offer of his entire property by Kamala's father, the second marriage is stopped. Kamala, however, now refuses to go back as the wife of an impotent husband, throws her 'māṅgalyam' (tāli) at the elders and walks out of the house. This play shows the definite influence of Ibsen and Shaw. Professional actors in those days relied on impromptu utterances, but the amateurs stuck to the discipline of written scripts.

The 'Suguṇa Vilāsa Sabhā' of Sambandha Mudaliyar was the biggest amateur theatrical organization of the time. Śaṅkaradas Swamikal, helped many boys' companies to function, and the troupes of Navab Rājamāṇikkam and Kaṇṇaiya were others to reckon with. But when the 'talkie' entered public life as the greatest entertainer, such dramatic troupes found it hard to survive. However, with help from many sources, the 'Nāṭaka Kaḻagam', a federation of theatrical organizations, and the 'Madras Nāṭya Saṅgham' were founded. The College of Dramaturgy and the Theatre Workshop of the Art of Experimental Theatre, Trivandrum, were other products of this period. The Shanmukham brothers, N. S. Krishnan and Mathuram couple, T. S. Baliah and S. V. Sahasranamam were popular stars. Their era was the pinnacle period of Tamil dramatic art. On the retirement or demise of the veterans, the 'Nāṭaka Kaḻagam' ceased to function.

The drama competition instituted by *Ānanda Vikaṭan*, a Madras weekly, brought to the fore several hundred long dramas, short one-act plays and many playwrights. But none of them, not even the prize winners, attained lasting name or fame. The 'Amateur Theatre Federation' conducted a drama festival in 1962. *Panittirai* (Fog Curtain) written by V. Krishnaswami won the first prize. In this theatrical a Hindu girl and an impetuous student patriot fall in love during the agitation for freedom in 1942. The girl's father, an engineer in the Indian Army, fixes their wedding for the day before his own departure to the war-front. But a few hours before the ceremony, the student throws acid on the British principal of his college and is arrested. The disappointed father thereupon gives his daughter in marriage to the son of a close friend of his, placing her under respectable guardianship. The girl, however, wavering between love and duty, discovers that her husband is a drink addict. But she ultimately decides to be dutiful to him at all costs. Her fidelity and wifely devotion make him give up his liquor, which he had taken to out of disappointment in a prior love-affair. When he learns by chance that his wife too has been disappointed in love, he resolves to unite her with her former lover, who is still in gaol. The young revolutionary, meanwhile, escapes from custody and reaches the girl whom he woos again. When she declines to swerve from duty, he commits suicide. Her own husband does not know these developments but is determined to unite the lovers. However, he is involved in an accident and dies and the girl is left bereft of husband and lover.

Categories of Dramatic Literature

From about the middle of the 19th century till the third quarter of the 20th century there has been quite a large volume of dramatic writing. This writing can easily be classified into different categories, namely, plays only for acting, plays only for reading, plays in verse and one-act plays.

Plays only for Acting. There are a considerable number of such plays, most of them on puranic themes and only a few on current social themes. There were several with songs, and in the published scripts of such dramas the tunes and *tāḷās* were also noted, e.g. *Bhōja Caritram* by T. S. Narayana Sastri. It may be more appropriate to call them operas, but they are to be distinguished from the *Rāma Nāṭakam* and the *Nandanār Caritram*, which had become classics. A large number of episodes or situations were taken from the Mahabharata and developed into full-length dramas. Several of these dramas were published in the name of Ramachandra Kavirayar, who did not write all the plays that bore his name.

Among the operatic creations of the 19th century, *Satya-Bhāṣa Hariścandra Vilāsam* by Appavu Pillai of Bangalore, is outstanding for its artistic skill and dramatic excellence. This masterpiece and storehouse of classical as well as folk musical modes was originally staged serially in 20 parts. Its Tamil was colloquial, thus providing greater scope for the musician-actors to exhibit their histrionic talents.

These plays were frequently called *vilāsam*. Important among the social *vilāsams* were the *Tahsildār Nāṭakam* (1868) and the *Dambācāri Vilāsam* (1867) written by Kasi Viswanatha Mudaliyar, a retired government official. The *darbār* of the Tahsildar and his corrupt ways can easily be mistaken for a picture of the Tahsildar in the latter half of the 20th century. Dambachari was a copy of a real historical figure who lived the life of a dandy in suburban Madras. *Dambācāri Vilāsam* was a very popular play in the first two decades of this century. *Desiṅgurājan* was a historical play adapted from a ballad of the same name.

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Plays only for Reading. Among the many plays primarily intended for reading, *Pṛthivirājan* (1911) and *Kīcakan* (1930) by C. R. Namasivaya Mudaliyar (1876–1935) and *Hariścandran* by Bhavanandam Pillai (1863–1932) are noteworthy. Sambandha Mudaliyar, a member of the Madras Judiciary, was, as already mentioned, a prolific writer of plays on all kinds of themes. All of them were put on the boards between 1910 and 1930. Though written for the stage, they were also read with interest by the people of the day. Many imitated Sambandha Mudaliyar, but none attained his success.

Plays in Verse. The first work that should be mentioned in this category is, naturally, Sundaram Pillai's *Manōnmaṇīyam* (1891). Sundaram Pillai was a Professor of Philosophy in Trivandrum who wanted the Tamil people to progress through contact with English literature. Imbued with Shakespeare's thoughts, he wrote this drama on the Shakespearian model of acts and scenes, and in Shakespearian blank verse. The story is taken from an English poem but the setting and the atmosphere are entirely pre-medieval Tamilnadu.

Jivakan, a Pandya king, has an only daughter, Manonmani. His scheming minister Kutilan, planning to get her married to his son, influences the king to shift his capital from Madurai to Tirunelveli. Jivakan's preceptor, Sundaramunivar (really a copy of Sundaraswami, the guru of the author), ensures the safety of the king and protects him from the evil intentions of Kutilan. Manonmani one day sees Purushottaman, the Chera ruler, in her dream and falls in love with him. When her father refuses the hand of his daughter to Purushottaman, a war ensues. Sensing that he might be defeated, Jivakan consents to the wedding of his daughter to the son of Kutilan. Meanwhile Kutilan discovers a subterranean passage from the palace leading to Purushottaman's camp. He stealthily meets Purushottaman and promises the Chera that he will hand over Jivakan as a prisoner to him and begs Purushottaman to make him king of Pandinad. But Purushottaman, a righteous prince, takes Kutilan into custody and reaches Jivakan's palace by way of the underground passage. There he finds wedding ceremonies going on. Manonmani, compelled to wed the son of Kutilan, is stepping forward with a garland in her hand when she turns and finds in front of her Purushottaman, her lover in her dreams. Things come to a happy end with the wedding of Purushottaman and Manonmani, and the punishment of Kutilan.

This story has been written as a noteworthy literary drama, but it was never acted as Shakespeare's classics were. The opening song of the drama, which is an invocation to Mother Tamil, has been adopted by the Government of Tamilnadu as the State anthem.

Many followed in the footsteps of Sundaram Pillai. Almost all of them wrote only in the *āśiriyam* metre (blank verse). Among such writers were T. Lakshmana Pillai (1864–1950), who wrote *Ravivarma*, and V. G. Suryanarayana Sastri (1870–1903), who wrote *Mānavijayam* and *Kalāvatī*. There were several others too, but not one of them achieved Sundaram Pillai's distinction.

Musical Plays and Social Plays

Leaving aside the above categorization, Tamil plays of the modern period could be seen in a different light. There has already been reference about operas. Plays interspersed with songs have been in vogue for three or four decades from the last decade of the 19th century. They were popular not only in Tamilnadu, but in Kerala as well. 'Saṅgīta Nāṭakam' as they were called, have been copied in Malayalam.

Tamil does not lack plays with a social message. Patriotic dramas were written by T. K. Pavalar. His *Khadarin Vettri* (Victory of Khadi) and *Dēśiyakkoṭi* (the National Flag) have enthused the masses with patriotic feelings. Quite a few dramatic companies encouraged not only talented actors, but also playwrights with a vision. B. S. Ramaiyya's *Tērōṭṭiyin Makan* (The Charioteer's Son) and *Pataccōṟu* have been a tremendous success on the stage. In the same way, K. Balachandar and S. Ramaswamy (pseud.: Cho) have made a mark with their plays dealing with social problems. The biting satire of 'Cho' is exemplified in *Tughlak* and *Sambhavāmi Yugē Yugē*. In the latter Sri Krishna who takes birth to end corruption is being branded a lunatic and sent to an asylum by an officer of the Public Works Department and an advocate.

Aṇṇādurai, the late D. M. K. leader, has been a powerful dramatist. His *Oru Rāṭṛi* (One Night) and *Nīti Dēvan Mayakkam* (God of Justice Sleeps) have been widely acclaimed. M. Karuṇānidhi and Indira Pārthasārathy have written a number of worthwhile social plays.

One-Act Plays. The one-act play is a modern feature in Tamil, born of the influence of western literature on Tamil writers. The Tamil journals, monthlies and weeklies, have been responsible for encouraging this form of writing. The average middle-class reader, who has little leisure and less inclination to read anything lengthy, has time to read only a few pages of a journal at a sitting. Yet readers from this class form the bulk of the reading population. To cater to their tastes, the one-act play (like the short story) has become almost a staple item. Rabindranath Tagore was probably the model and inspiration for this genre. His re-creation of the puranic and epic characters, such as Karna and Kunti, making them relive in particular situations, captivated the minds of Tamil writers, who adopted similar themes, as well as some original ones, for their one-act plays. In these plays, the characters are flashed on the mind of the reader like figures seen through a window, situations are grasped quickly, as from a picture on the wall, and

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one idea, one state of mind of a character is exposed from the very beginning. Though quite a large number of one-act plays have been written, compilations of these plays are few.

Translations. A large number of translations and adaptations of Sanskrit and English plays have been made. Kalidasa's *Śākuntalam* has been translated by many. The translations by Maraimalai-adihal and R. Raghava Aiyangar are the best known, but the former's work is acclaimed as a superior translation. Kadiresan Chettiar rendered *Mṛcchakaṭika* into Tamil and called it *Maṇṇiyal Śiṛutēr* (Little Clay Cart), which was both scholarly and true to the original.

Shakespeare, of course, is the playwright most translated by writers in Tamil. Justice Maharajan translated the tragedies in partly colloquial but elegant language. His aim has been to recapture in Tamil the spirit of the original and in this he has succeeded. However, these plays have never been staged.

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Telugu

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Though drama as a literary form developed later, the dramatic mode of composition in Telugu was in vogue for many centuries. Tikkana, who lived in the 13th century, in his translation of the Mahabharata, refers to different types of folk-drama learnt by Uttara in the canto entitled 'Virāṭa-parva'. He compared the gallop of horses on the battlefield to a puppet show which was a primitive form of folk-drama. Even Palkuriki Somanatha, a poet of the 12/13th century, states in *Paṇḍithārādhya Caritra* that puppet shows based on episodes from the Mahabharata and incidents in the life of Lord Siva were enacted on the night of the Sivaratri festival when the people witnessed those performances and kept awake. In his works like *Basavapurāṇa*, we find references to several folk-dances and entertainments like *Pérani* and *Kōlāṭam*.

Srinatha, a celebrated poet of the 15th century, wrote a sort of drama called *Vīdhināṭakam* depicting some street scenes under the title *Krīḍābhirāmam* (1928). It is a type of play performed in the open-air without the accessories of a regular theatre. Srinatha referred to ano her form of drama known as *Yakṣagāna*, which is predominantly musical. Some critics remarked that the term *Yakṣagāna* may be a Sanskritized form of the Telugu word *Jakkula Pāṭa*. There is a tribe in Andhra known as Jakkula the members of which specialize in dancing and acting. The word *Jakkula Pāṭa* (Song of the Jakkula) is derived from the name of this tribe, its Sanskritized form being *Yakṣagāna*. *Jakkula Pāṭa* is a type of folk-drama dominated by song and dance with little scope for action and characterization. They resemble the western operas in their emphasis on music and in their appeal to the masses.

Folk-dramas were in vogue for many centuries. But no attempt was made to write a full-fledged literary drama till about 1860 when the first original play was written.

Pioneers

The establishment of a university at Madras in 1857 gave an impetus to writers who came under the spell of English literature. They began to feel an irresistible urge to embark upon new modes of expression. Fascinated by the vigour and variety found in English dramas, Telugu writers of that period realized the potential of drama as an effective literary form and medium of communication.

The daring Korada Ramachandra Sastry (Korāḍa Rāmacandra Śāstri, 1816–1900) wrote the first original drama in Telugu entitled *Mañjari Madhukarīyamu* named

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after its heroine and hero. Published in 1860, it is a landmark in the history of Telugu drama.

But drama became more popular with the translation of classical Sanskrit plays. Kokkonda Venkataratnam (Kokkoṇḍa Vēṅkaṭaratnam, 1842–1915), a great classical scholar, brought out his translation of *Narakāsura Vijaya Vyāyōgam* in 1871. This was the first translation of a Sanskrit play into Telugu. Paravastu Venkatarangacharyulu (Paravastu Vēṅkaṭaraṅgācāryulu, 1842–1900) followed the model set by Kokkonda Venkataratnam and published a translation of Kalidasa's *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* in 1872. Making a departure from this trend, Vavilala Vasudeva Sastri (Vavilala Vāsudēvaśāstri, 1851–1897) translated Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* altering the title but retaining the names of characters. This was the first translation of an English drama into Telugu.

Though some minor plays were written on original themes based on Sanskrit as well as English models, the translations made a greater impact on the first phase of the evolution of drama in Telugu.

It is convenient to refer to translations under two heads, (1) translations from Sanskrit and (2) translations from English and other western languages.

Translations from Sanskrit

As already stated *Narakāsura Vijaya Vyāyōga* was the first drama in Telugu translated by Kokkonda Venkataratnam. It was followed up by his other translations, *Dhananjaya Vijaya Vyāyōga* (1897) and *Āndhra Prasanna Rāghavam* (1899). The author was a celebrated classical scholar who may be compared to Dr Johnson in his erudition. *Dhananjaya Vijaya Vyāyōga* deals with the episode of the capture of the cows in the Mahabharata. His *Āndhra Prasanna Rāghavam* is a translation of the famous play by poet Jayadeva.

Though it was claimed that Korada Ramachandra Sastri's translation of *Vēnī Samhāra* by Bhattanarayana, was the first attempt at translating a Sanskrit drama into Telugu, the pride of place goes to Kokkonda Venkataratnam as this translation was not published. Both Kokkonda Venkataratnam and Paravastu Venkata Rangacharyulu who translated *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* used classical Telugu for the main characters and pure Telugu for the minor characters.

In 1875, Kandukuri Viresalingam (Kandukuri Vīrēśalingam, 1848–1919), the prolific and versatile writer, published his translation of *Śākuntala* in his journal *Vivēka Vardhini*. This translation is the best of all the translations of Kalidasa's classic as it captured the alluring grace of the original. He also translated other plays from Sanskrit like *Ratnāvali*, *Mālavikāgnimitram* and *Prabōdhacandrōdayam*, though they were not equally famous. Vavilala Vasudeva Sastri published his translation of Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Rāmacarita* in 1881 and Sudraka's *Mṛchhakaṭikam* (Clay Cart) in 1891. He used the same classical dialect for the high as well as the low characters. Vaddadi Subbaraya Kavi's (Vaḍḍādi Subbarāya Kavi, 1854–1939) translation of *Vēnī Samhāra* (1886) proved to be very popular on the stage. It is said that the author himself played the roles of Dharmaraja and Aswathama very effectively. Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham (Cilakamarti Lakṣmīnarasiṁham, 1867–1946), the celebrated poet, novelist and dramatist, started his career as a translator with *Pārvatī Pariṇayam* in 1899. Though he translated many of Bhasa's dramas, the popularity of the original plays overshadowed his merited translations. Vedam Venkataraya Sastri (Vēdam Vēṅkaṭarāya Śāstri, 1853–1929), a profound scholar enriched Telugu literature by translations of many famous Sanskrit dramas. In quick succession he rendered into Telugu, *Nāgānandam* (1891) *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* (1896), *Priyadarśika* (1909), *Mālavikāgnimitram* (1919), *Ratnāvali* (1921) and some other dramas. Another eminent scholar, Achanta Venkataraya Sankhyayana Sarma (Ācanta Vēṅkaṭarāya Sānkhyāyana Śarma, 1864–1933) translated Kalidasa's *Vikramōrvaśīyam* and Bhavabhuti's *Uttara Rāma Carita*. Manavalli Ramakrishna Kavi (Mānavalli Rāmakṛṣṇa Kavi, 1866–1957) translated the plays of Bhasa. The early phase of Telugu drama was dominated by translations from Sanskrit. Some of these dramas continue to be popular. Later, free translations and adaptations came into vogue. Balijepalli Lakshmi Kantam's (Balijēpalli Lakṣmīkāntam, 1881–1953) *Uttara Rāghavam* (1910) initiated this trend of adaptations which avoided the method of literal translation and which sought to highlight the essential aspects of the inspiring originals. *Vicitra Rāghavam* by Venkata Parvatiswara Kavulu published in 1933 is a fine specimen of this style of writing.

Translations from Indian Languages

The basic unity of Indian culture lying hidden behind its amazing diversity prompted some writers to translate into Telugu famous dramas from other regional languages. The dramas (*Mebāḍ Patan*, 1908, *Pāṣāṇi*, 1900) of the renowned playwright Dwijendralal Roy were translated from the Hindi version. *Mēvāḍupatanamu* (1922) and *Pāṣāṇi* (1923) had a successful run on the stage for many years. Pingali Nagendra Rao (Piṅgaḷi Nāgēndrarāvu, 1901–72) began his career as a playwright with the spirited translations mentioned above. Sripada Kameswara Rao (Śrīpāda Kāmēśvara Rāvu, 1877–1943), an actor conversant with several Indian languages, evolved a special technique of translation and rendered into Telugu some plays from Bengali, Hindi and Oriya. He also translated the Tamil play of Sambandha Mudaliar titled *Līlāvatī Sulōcanam* (*Līlāvatī Sulōcanam*) in 1927. His translations proved to be successful on the stage. B. Gopala Reddi (Gopāla Reḍḍi, b. 1907), an eminent statesman and man of letters, translated the lyrical drama

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of Rabindranath Tagore like *Citra*, *Karṇa-Kunti*, *Kacha-Devayāni* as well as full-length plays like *Visarjan*, striving to introduce to the Telugu readers the sweet and delicate character of the original.

Translations from English

Vavilala Vasudeva Sastry, who was an English teacher by profession, was the first to translate an English drama into Telugu. His translation of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* into Telugu retaining the names of characters in the play entitled *Sijaru Caritramu* was published in 1875. He used the four-line stanza called 'tēṭa-gīti', each line having five feet and ten syllables because it resembles Shakespeare's blank verse. At some places he used the spoken dialect to render the dialogues natural. Kandukuri Viresalingam translated Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* (*Venīsu Vartakudu*) and *The Comedy of Errors* (*Camatkāra Ratnāvaḷi*) in 1880. He also rendered into Telugu Sheridan's *Duenna* under the caption *Rāgamañjari* (1886) and *The Rivals* under the title of *Kalyāṇa Kalpavalli* in 1894. He made a free translation altering the names of places and persons with the intention of making them popular and natural. He used spoken Telugu for the low characters. The translation was entirely in prose which runs smooth and simple Gurujada Śrīramamurthy (Gurujāḍa Śrīrāmamūrti, 1851–1900) took greater liberties with the text and omitted many passages which he deemed irrelevant and alien to the customs and traditions of India. He brought out his Telugu version of *The Merchant of Venice* under the title *Suhrut Subhāṣitamu* (1880). Portia's character is so altered as to make her seem to be an Indian girl. References to Greek and Latin mythology were omitted. Raja Bhujangarao (1876–1940) translated *As You Like It* under the title *Cārumati Pariṇayam* (1917). The Sahitya Akademi, Delhi, commissioned and published translations of *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* in 1957–58.

Besides the plays of Shakespeare and Sheridan, the comedies of Moliere were adapted and imitated by Bhamidipati Kameswara Rao (Bhamiḍipāṭi Kāmēśvara Ravu, 1897–1957). Ibsen's problem plays also attracted the attention of translators. Ibsen's play *The Brand* was translated under the title *Bhīṣmudu* and published in 1927. His play *The Enemy of the People* was adapted and filmed as *Pedda Manuṣulu* (Gentlemen). The symbolic plays of Maurice Maeterlinck caught the imagination of Bhamidipati Kameswara Rao who imitated the technique in his early plays. Along with Maeterlinck some other continental playwrights and Russian dramatists like Gorky and Chekhov also excited interest. Sri Sri (pseud. of Srīrangam Srīnivāsa-rāvu, 1910–83) rendered into Telugu the reputed comedy of Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*. Of course, these translations were done from standard English translations.

The Western Influence. In the earliest phase Telugu drama was influenced by the masterpieces of western playwrights and their techniques. Translation and adaptation gradually led to original compositions based on the western models. Dharmavaram Ramakrishnamacharya (Dharmavaram Rāmakṛṣṇamācārya, 1853–1913) who wrote thirty plays and who was hailed as the 'Father of the Telugu Drama' was profoundly influenced by the Shakespearian technique of tragedy. He defied the hide-bound conventions of Indian rhetorics and ventured to write the first tragedy in Telugu entitled *Viṣāda Sāraṅgadhara* (The Tragic Sarangadharas, 1889). He also discarded some of the outmoded techniques like prologue, epilogue and aside. He introduced modern problems into mythological stories to enhance their appeal and pointed out their relevance to contemporary society. He employed stylistic variations according to the nature and status of the characters.

Viṣāda Sāraṅgadhara. It is a tragedy of fortune, just like *Romeo and Juliet* of Shakespeare. A story is woven around a prince, Sarangadhara who became a victim of Chitrangi, a passionate queen of Rajaraja Narendra, the father of Sarangadhara. Rajaraja Narendra, the king, awards capital punishment to his own son Sarangadhara, believing his queen Chitrangi. He, after learning the truth, tries to stop the punishment. The force of unseen fate was such that the message could not reach in time and the tragedy takes place. This is one of the famous tragic dramas in Telugu.

Panuganti Lakshminarasimha Rao (Pānuganṭi Lakṣmīnarasiṁha Rāvu, 1865–1940) was also deeply impressed with the universal vision of Shakespeare and it was his ambition to reflect this world in his dramas like the great master of drama. The dramas of John Galsworthy and Somerset Maugham might have inspired some dramas dealing with the theme of social justice. Crime and detective dramas written in the West might have provided inspiration to dramas like S. Sreedevi's play *Kāḷarātri* (1955) and *Phaṇi* (1957) which were popular with amateur actors in the fifties.

Wit and humour found in some of the comedies and farces may be traced to the western influence exerted by the plays of Moliere, Oscar Wilde and George Bernard Shaw. It must be acknowledged that the influence of English and western drama has stimulated the growth and development of Telugu drama.

Original Dramas

Though original dramas were written after a long spell of translations and adaptations, they began to display variety and may be classified as mythological, historical, social and psychological plays.

Mythological Plays. Many dramas were written upon episodes borrowed from the Ramayana, Mahabharata and

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Bhāgavata because the theatre was recognized as a powerful mass medium. Viresalingam attempted original plays like *Prahlāda*, *Satya Hariścandra* and *Uttara Gōgrahaṇa* during 1885–86. Though Dharmavaram Krishnamacharya wrote a good number of mythological plays, his *Citranalīyamu* (1894) became a popular classic on the stage because of the moving treatment of the theme of separation and reunion of Nala and Damayanti. His play *Ajāmiḷa* (1895) offers a good study in characterization. The wicked Ajamila is depicted as a bold reformer, warm lover and brave hero. The silent scene, mime, in *Ajāmiḷa* has a telling effect. Viresalingam introduced the principle of internal conflict in his dramas and preferred songs to poems. We find them in a lavish measure in all his plays.

Chilakamarthi Lakshminarasimham became immensely popular with his play *Gayōpākhyānam* (1909). It broke all the previous records and one lakh copies of the play were sold out within a few years after publication. It is an epoch-making event in Andhra where we have more borrowers than buyers of books. Its popularity is due to the clear and catchy style of its poems. The drama deals with one of the famous mythological themes, i.e. fight between Arjuna and Lord Sri Krishna on account of a demi-god (Gandharva) called 'Gaya'. Gaya, while travelling in the air offends Krishna unknowingly and seeks refuge in Arjuna who in turn promises to protect him. This plot illustrates the *Śaraṇāgata rakṣaṇa tatva*: the unique trait of a true Indian warrior.

Prasanna Yādavam (1927), another popular mythological play, portrayed the conflict between Narakasura and Lord, Krishna. It was Chilakamarthi's favourite play. Panuganti Lakshmi Narasimharao made his debut as playwright in 1900 with the drama *Narmadā-Purukutsīyam*. The inset play where the heroine Narmada is made to stand as a statue reminds us of a similar scene in *The Winter's Tale*. He touched heights of sublimity in *Rādhākṛṣṇa* (1909) where he glorifies Radha's character and exalts her love for Krishna. The union of Radha and Krishna is depicted as the holy bridal of the soul and the supreme. He dramatized the Ramayana in four plays depicting four stages in Rama's life. The plays were very popular during the thirties.

The celebrated twin poets Tirupati Venkata Kavulu (Divakarla Tirupati Śāstry, 1872–1920 and Cellapilla Vēṅkaṭaśāstry, 1870–1950) turned dramatists and wrote *Pāṇḍavōdyōga Vijayamulu* (1930), a play which continues to be a favourite with the people despite all the changes in taste and trends. Some of the verses in the play retain their perennial charm. However, the success of this play has been a setback to real histrionic talent. Recitation of poems in a musical style has gained supremacy over action and delivery of dialogue. Another outstanding classic among plays of this type is Balijepalli Lakshmi Kantam's *Hariścandra* (1912) which could eclipse the popularity of the earlier play on the same theme by the veteran Kandukuri Viresalingam.

It is not out of place to refer to the dramas written by Tripuraneni Ramaswamy Choudhari (Tripuranēni Rāmasvāmi Caudhury, 1886–1943) who expressed the spirit of revolt against the Ramayana and Mahabharata in *Kurukṣētram* (1911), *Sambuka Vadha* (1920), *Khūni* (1935). Their elaborate preface set forth the ideology of the writer more forcefully than the plays which never gained popularity on the stage though they provoked thought.

Historical Plays. Playwrights used drama as a medium for rousing patriotic fervour and legitimate pride in past glory by writing spiritedly about some of the inspiring incidents in history. History is not treated in a dull fashion presenting a simple chronicle of events. Instead, a touch of art transforms dull facts and brings the past alive. Though he deviated from history, Dharmavaram Ramakrishnamacharya's *Śivāji* (1947) glorifies the ideal of Hindu-Muslim unity by representing Roshanara as a Hindu girl.

Pratāpa Rudrīyam (1897) by Vedam Venkataraya Sastry (1853–1939) presents a glorious chapter from the history of Andhra. Though the author takes liberties with history, he succeeds in recreating the period of the Kakatiyas. Interesting subplots, intrigues, sparkling dialogue and dexterous manipulation of situations contribute to the success of this play, which holds a high place among original dramas in Telugu. *Pracaṇḍa Cāṇakyam* (1909) by Panuganti deals with the Mauryan period but it deviates in many respects from the famous Sanskrit play *Mudrārākṣasa*.

Rāmadās (1920) by Dharmavaram Gopalachari (Gōpālācāryulu) is also a famous historical play with its accent on the theme of devotion. The hero Gopanna was imprisoned by Tanasha, a nawab of Golkonda because he has spent the revenue collection on building a shrine for Rama at Bhadrachalam. The legend connected with his release from prison by divine intervention is powerfully described in the play. *Bhakta Tukārām* (1952) by Suravaram Pratāpa Reddy (Suravaram Pratāpareḍḍī, 1896–1950) belongs to the same type of historical play depicting the price paid by a devotee for the realization of God. *Na Rāju* (My King, 1929) and *Kṣātra Hindu* (1956) are powerful historical plays written by Pingali Nagendra Rao. *Rasaputra Vijayam* (1924) by Icchapurapu Yajnanarayana (Ichāpurapu Yajñanārāyaṇa) roused patriotism during the 'Vandemataram' movement. In the prologue there is a spirited invocation addressed to Mother India. His *Rāṇāpratāp Singh* proved equally powerful on the stage.

Social Plays. Using drama as an effective medium many writers sought to reflect the economic and social conditions of the period, exposing the crying problems of the times. The first social drama was *Nandaka Rājyam* written by Vavilala Vasudeva Sastry in 1880. Viresalingam's farces like *Brahma Vivāha*, *Vyavahāra Bodhini* and *Vivēka Dīpiki*

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exposed sore contemporary evils, like early marriage, casteism, moral turpitude and corruption in official circles. Righteous indignation dominates any literary craft in these plays.

An outstanding social comedy is *Kanyāśulkam* (1897) written by Gurajada Apparao (Gurjāḍa Appārāvu, 1861–1915). In his introduction to this play Gurajada says: 'I wrote to advance the cause of social reform and to combat a prejudice that the spoken dialect was unsuited to the stage.' This drama remains a masterpiece of social satire. The characters are drawn from real life displaying all the grace, kindness, oddities and lapses found in living human beings. Girisam, an interesting character in the play, has come alive like Falstaff and has become a byword for humbug and bluff. Panuganti's *Vriddha Vivāham* (Old Man's Wedding) and *Kāṇṭhābharaṇam* (Necklace) held their ground for several decades as social comedies.

In the thirties many social plays were written on a variety of problems. P. V. Rajamannar (1901–78) wrote a series of successful long plays and one-act plays. His play *Tappevaridi?* (Who is at Fault?, 1929) set people thinking upon the problems of marriage and love. Acharya Atreya's *N.G.O.* (1949) depicted the plight of an ill-paid clerk crushed by the problems arising from poverty. It became popular on the professional as well as amateur stage. Narla Venkateswara Rao (b. 1908) turned his attention to rural life. His playlet *Pai Panta* (Next Crop, 2nd ed., 1956) portrays the life of a poor farmer who is compelled to postpone the fulfilment of his desires to the coming harvest. In *Vantena* (Bridge, 2nd ed., 1956) he presents the onslaught of urban values which disturb the even flow of rural life. Mention must be made of the two plays, *Mundaḍugu* (Progress) and *Mābhūmi* (Our Soil) which were popular during 1945–46 when the Progressive Movement was active. Though written with a Marxist slant the plays proved effective in production because of their dramatic quality.

Among the writers of social plays Korrapati Gangadhara Rao wrote some effective dramas starting with his *Guddi Lōkam* (Blind World, 1955).

Psychological Plays. Panuganti's play *Sarōjini* (1930) may be said to be the first psychological play in Telugu. It deals with the anguish and magnanimity of Sarojini, a childless wife, who encourages her husband to marry again. The two wives and their husband die in a tragic manner. Bucchi Babu (Buccibābu, pseud. of Śivarāju Vēṅkaṭasubbarāvu, 1916–67) wrote a play entitled *Ātma Vañcana* (Self-deception, 1951), portraying the complex psychological turmoil in the mind of a young man. *Ātma Vañcana* is based on psycho-analysis. Rajasekhar, the hero, is an introvert. Being poor, he was brought up and educated by a Collector. He could not get reconciled with the idea of repaying his gratitude in the form of love and refused to marry the Collector's daughter. His beloved Poornima commits suicide after listening to the false story from Rani, the Collector's daughter, that she was going to marry Rajasekhar. With the conflict between his conscience and the circumstances, Rajasekhar also commits suicide thinking that is the only sacrifice he can make for the family which gave him his education.

Gudipati Venkatachalam (1894–1978) used drama as a potent instrument to propagate his unconventional and anarchic ideas on love and marriage in his plays like *Śaśāṅka*, *Purūrava* and *Bhānumati*.

Tragedies. As said before, the first tragedy in Telugu was Vavilala Vasudeva Sastry's translation of *Julius Caesar* while the first original tragedy in Telugu was *Viṣāda Sāraṅgadhara* by Dharmavaram Ramakrishnamacharya published in 1889. Kolachalam Srinivasarao (1854–1919) attempted a historical tragedy, *Vijayanagara Sāmrājya Patanamu* (Fall of Vijayanagar). Duvvuri Rami Reddi's (1895–1947) *Kumbharāṇa* is also a historical tragedy. *Nartana Śāla*, *Anārkali* and *Triśūlamu* are the tragedies written by the versatile Viswanatha Satyanarayana (Viśvanātha Śatyanārāyaṇa, 1895–1976). He conducted a language experiment in *Triśūlamu* by employing the language of the 12th century, the time when the incidents took place. He also used couplets of Palkuriki Somanatha, a poet of that century.

Special mention may be made of *Kāñcanamālā* by Veluri Chandrasekharam (1896–1964) which is a unique tragedy based on the Greek model, observing the three unities. It was acclaimed by discerning readers as an outstanding achievement. Based on the life of Ashoka the play portrays the raging internal conflict in Tishyarakshita, the second wife of the emperor who is fascinated by the beauty of Kunala, son of Ashoka by his first wife. The play glorifies true love which stands in contrast with lustful infatuation. An English translation by Amarendra with the same title was published in 1967.

Prahasanas or Farces. With many firsts to his credit, Viresalingam was the pioneer in the field of farces. He employed farce as a weapon to fight against superstition, sham and moral degeneration of his contemporaries. The farces of Chilakamarti and Panuganti had their day. Malladi Avadhani's (1915–46) *Asampūrṇa Rāmāyaṇam* (1939) is a delightful farce exposing the evils of commercial contractors who ruined the stage in Andhra. It ridicules the ignorance and incompetence of amateur actors who staged their version of the Ramayana with many ludicrous distortions.

Miscellaneous Forms of Drama. In 1936, Sivasankara Sastry (1892–1975) brought out his verse play *Padmāvati Caraṇa Cāraṇa Cakravarti* which was a successful experiment blazing a new trail.

Musical plays came into vogue with the growing popula-

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rity of the radio. Muddukrishna's (1899–1970) *Anārkali* was the first musical play that went on the air from the Madras station of All India Radio in 1938. Many musical features were written by Vinjamuri Sivaramarao and broadcast from Vijayawada. Devulapalli Krishna Sastri (1898–1980) carved out a niche for himself by writing lyrical features like *Guha*, *Kṛṣṇāṣṭami*, and *Vipranārāyaṇa*, Rajani Kanta Rao (b. 1920) earned fame as a writer of musical plays like *Caṇḍidās*. Arudra's (b. 1925) *Sītakōkachilaka* (Butterfly) and C. Narayana Reddi's (b. 1931) *Rāmappa* (1958) linger in the memories of listeners.

Even prose plays written for the radio left their impression on the listener's mind. Kodavati Ganti Kutumbarao's *Korakarāni Koyya* (Hard Nut to Crack), Gora Sastry's *Anandanilayam*, *Selavallo* (In Vacation) and *Āśa Kharidu Oka Ana* (The Price of Hope is One Anna) have become classics by their appeal and excellence. Bucchibabu, Srivatsava, Janamanchi Ramakrishna, Dasarathi and Amarendra attained distinction in this medium.

Even though Telugu drama is hardly a century old, it has registered significant growth. It has absorbed all that is good from the plays of the East and the West and gradually emerged as an important literary form.

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Urdu

ANWER AZEEM

The Rise of 'Nauṭaṅki'

The transition from a rudimentary manifestation of the dramatic element to proper theatrical presentation, determined the progress of Urdu drama (*Tamsil*, in academic translation) through what is popularly known in North India as *nauṭaṅki*. It was a theatre which sprang directly from folk sources of emotionalized expression in which religion, moral taboos and social conventions played their formative role.

The *nauṭaṅki* represented the earliest form of Urdu theatre in the north. Rural in its original complexion, it tended to absorb some shades of urban strands in its form if not in its inner content. It served as a theatrical hyperbole. The *nauṭaṅki* dealt with the commonplace and mundane, more in the form of burlesque or spoof than anything like serious theatre. Its chief aim seemed to be to make people laugh at what was presented on the improvised stage. For that the actors laughed at themselves, for, remotely or closely, they reflected the episodes and conflicts of their life through candid juxtapositions. This was usually accompanied by the beating of drums and songs. The actors came up on stage in their terrifying make-up and shouted or, perhaps, 'invented' their lines. The language pattern depended largely on the regional dialect. The narrative invariably developed through man-woman relationships which also strayed into the conflict between the rural rich and poor. Inveighing against the institutionalized values and morality of the time, the *nauṭaṅki* introduced the factor of socio-economic relevance though in style and form its presentation never rose above the level of a farce. Yet it was a great source of bawdy fun in which, more often than not, boys played the role of girls, with nothing aesthetic about it.

Against the background of the relegation of the remarkably developed Sanskrit drama when, along with the *nauṭaṅki*, puppet shows and bland presentations dominated the scene, the first features of serious drama started

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to crystallize. It was the time when romantic legends and heroic exploits of epic dimensions, mostly derived from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, as also the dramatized episodes from the plays of Kalidasa, gave sustenance to the vigorous theatre activity in the countryside and small towns. But gradually it became apparent that simultaneously a different trend, seeking sophistication and refinement, was asserting itself in towns like Lucknow, where it had succeeded in attracting the patronage of the ruling elite. *Rās Līlā* and *Rām Līlā* survived the process of transition. So did the *Jātrās* in the north-eastern fringe of India.

Inder Sabha Tradition

It may be noted in parenthesis that for a long time, Amānat's (1803–58) *Inder Sabhā* (*Urdu Theatre*, Abdul Aleem Nami, vol. I, p. 230), written in 1853 and staged in Lucknow in 1855–56, was considered to be the first Urdu stage drama. But the recent researches of Masud Hasan Rizvi (1900–73) revealed that Wajid Ali Shah's (ruler of Awadh) *Rādhā Kanhaiyyā Ka Qissa* (The Story of Radha and Kanhaiyya) was staged a year earlier. *Qissa* is the presentation of thematic episodes through verses set to music interspersed with dances. It is not entirely free of conversational lines. It mainly tells of love episodes of Radha and Krishna. The stage format is deeply influenced by the Sanskrit tradition of *Nada* and *Vidūṣakṭa*. The story revolves round the two lovers and the misunderstanding caused by Kubja (the hunchback woman whom Lord Krishna turned into a beautiful woman).

Amanat's *Inder Sabhā* is the tale of a fairy of Inder's Court falling in love with a human being, Prince Gulfam, whom she abducts to the fairyland. There, the prince asks of her a favour—to be taken to the Court of Lord Inder and to see the fairies' dance. His presence there is detected and Inder imprisons him in a dark well. The fairy impersonates a *jogan* (a mendicant woman) and after pleasing Raja Inder, gets Gulfam freed as a reward for her excellence as a dancer.

Madari Lal's *Inder Sabhā* (1887) too, by and large, narrates the same story with some variations. But, barring the suspense, the story in *Inder Sabhā* serves only as an excuse for offering lilting songs and dances.

The impact of Sanskrit drama on *Inder Sabhā* is unmistakable for it focuses all attention on the chorus and mythical elements. No curtains are used. Most of the play is in verse and the use of various types of light music has been made to enhance its entertainment value.

Inder Sabhā is no problem play but its significance as a stage art form as well as a medium which combines music, dance, poetry and prose is yet to be fully appreciated and assessed. As such, it still remains a forerunner of modern Indian drama.

Despite the above experiments in theatrical expression there was a clear inertia in this genre. There was more to it than a lack of dramatic talent among the writers. Drama as a fictional genre had not captured the imagination of the writers. Nor had there been full awareness of the potential and dynamism of the medium. But later, as the influence of western literature and its traditions increased, and as the captivating power of Greek tragedies and western drama, (mainly English) revealed itself to the writers and students of literature, the first ripples of creative effort appeared on the stagnant surface, and initial steps were taken towards bridging the gap. The Parsee Theatre played a pioneering role in this direction. Long before its publication, *Khurṣīd*, was put on the stage, and Bombay became the hub of activity of the Urdu theatre, which was still in its infancy, it had been treated to a toast production of *Rustam-o-Sohrab* by Dada Bhai Patel (1871; cf. Khamhata's introduction to *Urdu Drama*). *Khurṣīd* (1871) was a translation of a Gujarati play written by Adilji Jamshed Ji Khori (late 19th century). It was rendered into Urdu by Bahram Fareedoon Ji Marzaban (19th century). It was then called *Hindustāni Nāṭak*. The play develops around a palace episode in which the king orders the queen to be put on auction. The incidents helping the plot to grow may have been incredible but they succeeded in creating necessary dramatic tension in which fantasy merged with reality.

During this period, Urdu drama moved forward in theatrical leaps. Aram (19th century), who wrote plays for the Parsee stage, was prolific in feeding the voracious theatrical companies of Bombay. His works like *Hīra* (1876), *Bāgh-o-Bahār* (The Spring Time, 1876), *Bahrām aur Ṣirin* (1877), *Javanbakht* (1877), which were thematically derived from the *Śākuntala*, *Laila-Majnū*, etc. came in a stream. Aram's *Nūrjahān*, which was considered a well-knit work, was staged in 1872 by the Bombay Theatre on Grant Road. Then came a number of playwrights like Raunaq (whose play *Bakaoli* appeared in 1897), Zareef (end of the 19th century) and Abdullah (end of the 19th century, whose drama in verse *Alībābā Cahal Qazzaq* was published in 1899 at Meerut), who zealously enriched the repertoire of the Urdu theatre.

Agha Hashr. By the time Talib Banarsi, Mehdi Hasan Lucknawi, Narain Prasad Betab and Agha Hashr (1880–1938) appeared on the scene, the theatre-going public had already developed a taste for drama. This phase was dominated by Agha Hashr, whose plays, though still a far cry from the plays imbued with refined literary and aesthetic values, unravelled the inherent quality of Urdu language as a vehicle of dramatic expression. Agha Hashr left no source untapped. The larger part of his work was a direct imitation of Shakespearian plays. He also drew heavily on legends and myths, on tales of the Arabian Nights and some popular stories originating in Central Asia and the Middle East, to create his own drama. He was not gifted with intellectual

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depth or aesthetic vision. But he knew how to play with words on a superficial level, imbue situations and characters with human tensions, and knew intuitively what would, in a given theme, appeal to his public. His pen played to the gallery. As for moral dilemmas and social problems, he employed them all in the medieval framework of human existence. There were intrigues for crowns; there were conflicts between vice and virtue on rarefied, abstract levels, love and beauty murder and gallantry.

Agha Hashr's remarkable contribution was the successful reorganization of worn-out conventional material into a well-shaped dramatic production. His efforts took Urdu drama out of its primitive framework and gave it a new structural robustness. And yet these attempts could not take the Urdu drama beyond the morass of mediocrity, dragging everything down to predestination. All his plays have the same pattern of events and clashes contrived to reach the climax through artificial manipulation. The total effect of his work betrays a kind of hackneyed dreariness. However flashy and high-sounding, a contrived handling of mechanically-transplanted human situations cannot make good drama. Drama must flow from some genuine experience and blend with the sensibility of the times. With all its noisy and farcical theatricality, Hashr's drama failed to become a realistic and an elevating experience. Superimposed suspense and conflict of characters expressed through virulent onrush of words, interspersed with comic sequences, and dazzling costumes alone could not make up for the lack of some profound motivation and vital values set forth and blended together into a pulsating structure of drama. Hashr's drama blew like a tempest over an enclosed sheet of stagnant water, stirred it violently, and spent itself in the process.

Imtiaz Ali Taj. Agha Hashr's phase was followed by a lingering lull and then by some literary plays without much success for they lacked dramatic vision and skill. But a beginning was made. These authors turned to human situations with their roots in socio-economic relations and cultural-moral values of life which made them relevant. Their source of inspiration was their awareness of the classical drama of the West. Shakespearian themes, with their overwhelming humanity and universal truths, had at last inspired them. Old stories and legends provided other rich material. But the real break came late when Imtiaz Ali Taj (1899–1975) wrote his *Anārkalī* in 1927. It marked the end of imbalance in the Urdu drama.

When Imtiaz Ali Taj wrote his play *Anārkalī*, it marked the advent of the well-constructed drama in Urdu. It brought about a reorientation in the whole dramatic approach. The theme became the central concern of the playwright and its contemporary relevance a basic motivation. *Anārkalī* itself, as a play, developed around a legend originating during the reign of Jalaluddin Akbar. The episodic edge of the drama is tragic; Anarkali is a ravishing courtesan, a dancer of rare grace and beauty, who has won the fancy of the young prince, Saleem. The Emperor who has extended and stabilized the borders of his empire at great pains and sacrifice, sees in the capricious young love a threat to his dream of a lifetime. He intervenes, firmly and menacingly. Saleem revolts, and the autocracy extorts the supreme price. Anarkali is buried alive under a wall. What gives this play a sensitive dimension is not only the tragic story of young love. The smothering of young love, an eternal theme, attains deeper poignancy and wider significance, because it puts the emotional and spiritual aspect of human existence into the socio-moral context. Anarkali has a premonition, which flows from the awareness of the futility of the situation, conditioned by the social stations to which the two lovers belong. It is not only a question of frustrated love. The violence with which Anarkali's most innocent song is muted in her breast under the weight of the dead stones is symbolic of the socio-moral hierarchy in an autocratic set-up. Everything seems preordained. Anarkali's tragic destiny, everyone knows, is irretrievable. The treatment is not free of rhetorics. Yet in it the moral crucible finds a very realistic base to project human conflicts. The result is its extended relevance to situational parallels in times beyond the time of its happening. The logic is simple. There is one God, and only one king who is the unchallenged agent of the will of God. His word is law. And the law lays down that any one who has the temerity to come in the way of the expedience of the affairs of state shall be destroyed. Thus Anarkali is doomed. The duality of human emotions born of social dichotomy leads to dubious moral sanctions. That is the burden of the plot. But the playwright has failed to develop it with full intensity. Some of the situations are contrived and the humour raw.

Plays of Social Significance

As a trend-setter, in the sense that at last a conscious attempt had been made to write a serious play, *Anārkalī*'s impact received further impetus from plays written more or less about the same time or soon thereafter by Abid Husain (1896–1979), Mohammed Mujib (b. 1902) and Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi (b. 1900), all of whom were professionally involved in academics. Their plays were emotional responses to the social problems and the moral dilemmas of the time with which the elitist intelligentsia was inclined to grapple. Despite their noble intentions and well-meaning reformist ideas they grievously lacked the creative aptitude and dramatic vision to bring alive the complexities of life on the stage.

Their approach was deliberative and not exegetical. This led to moral arbitrariness in their projection. They deluded themselves into believing that their work would serve as a great socio-moral expurgator. In actual fact, it resulted in

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the superimposition of their ideas on their characters who could very well have done without the author's pedantry.

Quraishi, in his *Said-ī-Zobūn* (The Captive of Misery, 1944), betrays this arbitrariness in his lopsided view of a contrived situation born of conjugal incompatibilities in which the husband is presented as the wolf and the young wife as the lamb. The dialogues, largely surcharged with emotion, tell a tale of unrelieved woe. The overdrawn characterizations destroy some of the human dimensions so necessary to impart a sense of comprehensiveness. Even his play *Naqṣ-ī-Ākhir* (The Last Traces, 1952), set against the background of the 1857 uprising, fails to move. What makes a play is the presentation of happenings on-stage and not a verbal description of happenings off-stage. Quraishi could not see the difference.

Though somewhat different in temperament and attitude, Abid Husain follows the same line of dramatic structure. He chooses characters as vehicles of his set ideas. The inflexibility of his own notions invades and saturates the world of his characters and their conflict hardly flows from the inner dynamics of the situation in which they find themselves. Most of the time, they indulge in polemical exchanges of diatribes without leading anywhere, for they are mainly confined to the primary postulates of feudal morality.

And yet Abid Husain succeeds in presenting some interesting glimpses of middle-class life where the ideas of liberalism and conservatism clash. As a conscious nationalist, involved in India's Freedom Movement, he concentrates on family relations or the social environment conditioned by economic factors and interests as also on aspects of political polarization at a time when the confrontation with the foreign power was heading for a final showdown under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi whose weapons were non-violence and satyagraha. Written in Berlin in 1925, in the wake of the Khilafat Movement, his play *Parda-ī-Ghaflat* (The Veil of Ignorance, 1925) depicts a family unit in which the conflict starts with the distribution of family property. Some of the characters cling to old values born of property rights but there are characters who defy and decry the prevalent conservative values and preach ideas of reform and change. The basic concept crystallizes as emancipation of woman, who has too long accepted the shackles of social bigotry and oppression. The playwright is more forthright in his attack on the social ills of the time than his contemporaries like Ishtiaq Hussain Quraishi and Fazlur Rahman (creative period concurrent with that of Abid Husain). Though Abid Husain's sense of humour is brittle, he tries to use this to some advantage in conveying some of his ideas and in exposing the hollowness of his conservative and dogmatic characters. Among the intermediary links leading to the development of modern Urdu drama, Mohammad Mujib's (b. 1902) play, *Habba Khatūn* (tr. 1939), has a significance of its own. Unlike Abid Hussain, Fazlur Rahman and Ishtiaq Husain Quraishi, but in a manner similar to that of Imtiaz Ali Taj, Mujib puts his dramatic material into a historical context dating back to Jalaluddin Akbar's reign, unfolding itself in the valley of Kashmir. Like most of his plays, *Habba Khatūn* is an intellectual play, allowing very little room for action, a malady which afflicts most of the 'dramatic' efforts of the early decades of the current century. Habba Khatoon's militant personality offers scope for considerable dramatic action but the process of intellectualization of the centrifugal tensions, issuing from Habba Khatoon's cry, 'Kashmir is for Kashmiris', puts a historical seal on the earliest stirrings for the right of autonomy for a people aspiring to live in freedom and dignity. Habba Khatoon is no Joan of Arc, yet she has enough moral integrity and intellectual perspicacity to emerge as a complete personality locked in a life-and-death battle in which she becomes one with the cause of the people of whose beauty she sings and of whose freedom she dreams. Some of his other plays, too, like *Khana-Janggi* (The Civil War, 1947) and *Azmaiṣ* (The Trial) have been based on historical episodes. The concept of integration is a running-thread in their thematic structures. He imbues his characters with radiant idealism. In *Azmaiṣ* Sadhari Singh proclaims: 'Till tonight we could be dubbed rebels. But now we are the soldiers of the Mughal Emperor. From now on the traitor is one who fights against us. The one—be he Indian or British—who is not with us is a traitor.' But in his plays like *Dūsri Ṣām* (The Next Evening) and *Heroine Ki Talāṣ* (The Search for a Heroine) Mohammed Mujib attempts to tackle a different kind of problem of urban society where the man-woman relationship has become much more involved and complex.

With Mohammad Mujib ends a whole phase of playwriting in Urdu under western influence. He knew Russian, so it is likely that he had read Chekhov in the original. From Greek classics and Shakespeare to Ibsen and Strindberg, he and his contemporaries had imbibed some of their creative inspiration. But even with this rich inspiration they were not able to create their own indigenous drama to meet the demands of the modern theatre with the complex sensibility of the industrial age where man stood alienated in a dehumanized society.

Birth of a New Theatre

The personality of Urdu drama at the turn of the forties underwent a cataclysmic change with the advent of a new theatre movement. It was called the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA). It represented a radical movement for the theatre of the people. A theatre of committed creativity, it worked for change in a decadent society, the norms of which it fought against. It meant a revolt against a fatalistic reconciliation with the forces of oppression and exploitation. The movement was multilingual and inter-

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regional. Through its activities, the People's Theatre became a great integrating force.

Jafri and Abbas. The committed theatre movement demanded a new kind of plays. It called for the quality of life as against theoretical rhetorics. Reality itself, in its stark totality, began to be projected on the stage. The year 1942 saw Urdu theatre in Bombay, which was the cradle of the Parsee theatre at one time, undergo a radical change in form as well as content. The blending of the traditions of folk theatre and the experiment of Urdu drama, though sometimes crude in some ways, bestowed a new vitality on the theatre as a whole. The need for regular plays was keenly felt to take the movement beyond folkish improvisations and create the drama of the people. It was at this stage that poet Ali Sardar Jafri (b. 1913) came forward with his play, *Yeh Kis Ka Khūn Hai?* (Whose Blood is This?, 1942). It was presented in Madanpura in Bombay before a predominantly Urdu-speaking audience. The response was heart-warming. Thus was born the 'new' Urdu drama with a 'new' sensibility and a 'new' vision. It grew with a new sense of confrontation with the evil which resided in and grew out of the very socio-economic-political way of life man was subjugated to and bled to maintain and defend.

Ali Sardar Jafri's play, *Yeh Kis Ka Khūn Hai?*, derives its theme from the grim situation India was facing in the early forties when a section of desperate nationalists had openly started inviting Japanese fascism to drive away the British. It was like inviting plague to fight cholera. The action takes place around Chittagong where once the 'armoury raiders' had fought pitched battles. Amjad, son of the local landlord Khan Bahadur Ali Hussain, is a close associate of an old terrorist, Ghosh, who operates as an agent of Japanese fascism. But, Rafiq, who dies at the end in a Japanese bombing, succeeds in exposing their machinations and in organizing the local people into a detachment of anti-fascist fighters.

It was soon followed by Khwaja Ahmad Abbas' *Zubaida* in 1943. It opens with an odd human conglomeration. The way the playwright introduces his characters has no ambiguity about it nor about the purpose and objective of their creator: as for instancy Meer Sahib—a middle-of-the-road conservative; Lala Sahib—their friend and a shopkeeper; Masterji—a schoolteacher, father of Zubaida; Hakim Bedil—a busybody and gossip of the town.

The very choice of characters and the development of the theme, as unfolded through speech and action on the stage, become a revealing commentary on local, national and international developments. They are all involved in affairs which apparently do not directly concern them.

Amjad and Zubaida, two educated (Zubaida less so, but she is the stronger character of the two) young people, are married according to the wishes of the two families, despite the scandal-mongering indulged in by Meer Sahib, the arch-reactionary, who does not like what he hears about Zubaida's non-conformist views. After their marriage, Amjad and Zubaida have very few days of peace and happiness because war breaks out, famine and epidemics follow, in the land.

This is enough to show how much ground Urdu drama had gained over the two decades, that is, between Taj's *Anārkalī* and Abbas' *Zubaida*. The realism in the choice of the theme and its presentation had changed the whole scene. Zubaida is not treated like Anarkali when she discards the purdah and plunges herself in work. The fight for her emancipation claims its toll when she contracts plague while nursing patients in the hospital.

These two plays symbolize the new trend of realism that had entered Urdu literature in the thirties and forties under the influence of Premchand's novels. The concept of realism itself can be understood and put into practice in different ways. To begin with, realism is a positive notion contraposed to philosophical idealism, to the attitude of romantic escapism in one's creative pursuit. The concept of realism, when introduced in creative work, cannot remain only a precept, a superimposed abstraction. The dynamic factors of creativity with which it comes into grips inevitably lead to the concept of change in social as well as individual terms. The collective involvement puts it into a historical context. Historicity, again, cannot but bring the protagonist by its inherent force of logic, to a point beyond which the present ends and future awaits him.

When realism deals with this human complexity, Ibsen, Chekhov and Brecht are born. Their art, then, becomes a multidimensional experience. The two Urdu plays discussed above do not represent that kind of complex realism which is different from topicality. Topicality in playwriting has its own place and significance. The People's Theatre, one of whose basic motivations is to carry awareness to the unaware, to agitate and rouse the people to demand their basic rights, to make them distinguish the obvious vice from the obvious virtue in terms of day-to-day situations, has to be different from the drama which deals with the labyrinth of socio-psychological complexities of existence, which deals not only with the problem of 'being' but also the 'whys' and 'wherefores' of it. Different from the drama which has to survive the 'immediate', transcend its own time and space of origin and become part of the representative heritage of the theatre; it then becomes a catalyst with deeper implications and with a more profound involvement in the agonizing questions of life. It is in this context that the role of plays like *Yeh Kis Ka Khūn Hai?* and *Zubaida* have to be comprehended.

Dramatizing other Works. While Khwaja Ahmad Abbas and Ali Sardar Jafri were writing plays for the committed theatre of Bombay and getting them staged and published, some university students like Khadija and Zahida, on their

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own, gave it a textual boost by dramatizing some of the better-known works of prose and poetry in Urdu, like Krishan Chander's *Anna Dāta* and Ali Sardar Jafri's *Nai Dunya Ko Salām* (1949) as also some works of Sahir Ludhianvi (staged in 1950) and Wamiq Jaunpuri (staged in 1950). The maturer literary quality flowered into sensitive dramatic presentations moulded by their directorial and histrionic talents. Khadija, in later years, devoted most of her time to translating into Urdu some of the masterpieces of world literature, but once in a while, appeared on Delhi stage in roles like Pavel's mother in Gorky's *Mother* adapted as *Sūraj Kā Safar* by Anwer Azeem and twice produced under the banner of the Indian People's Theatre Association. Zahida, who was to emerge essentially as a poet, returned to drama quite vigorously, intitially as a translator of Russian plays, and later, in the seventies turned to writing original plays. These two dramatic talents, thrown up by the cultural upsurge in Aligarh in the late forties have richly contributed to bridging the gap between the literary aspects of drama and its actual performance which involves histrionics, direction, lighting, music, costume, stage management, etc. These girls bravely faced the difficulties inherent in a taboo-ridden and bigoted social environment in the university and presented Ali Sardar Jafri's *Nai Dunya Ko Salām*, revealing powerfully its epic form to great dramatic advantage. This work of poetry, embodying a revolutionary saga, remains unsurpassed in its integrated appeal and dramatically projectable potential.

Between the Urdu drama of the forties, struggling to break out of its romantic shell and find a realistic accent, and the modern Urdu theatre, mainly confined to metropolitan audiences, much has happened which is yet so little. But whatever has happened owes a great debt to Aligarh's anonymous and unacknowledged enlightened theatre to which, apart from Khadija and Zahida, Munibur Rahman has made significant contribution through his translations and productions of plays of Moliere and Shakespeare.

Period of Transition

Besides, this period of transition from the forties onwards is marked by occasional forays some stalwarts of Urdu fiction like Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishan Chander, Sadat Hasan Manto and Upendranath Ashk made through their radio plays. Manto also presented plays in his *Ao* series (early forties) which appealed by their spontaneous way of unfolding, terse language construction and delightful sense of humour. Bedi and Krishan Chander overwhelmed their dramatic conceptualization with their obsessions as story-writers of great merit.

Apart from these, radio plays like Sajjad Zaheer's *Bīmār* (The Sick), Majeed Malik's seven plays included in his collection *Javāb* (Answers), Ishrat Rahmani's *Dukhi Sansār* (The Suffering World) and *Anokhā Sansār* (The Strange World), Ishraf Taimur's *Gharondey* (Castles in the Air) and plays by Ali Sardar Jafri, Sibte Hasan, Rasheed Jahan collected in *Naī Tasvīri* (New Images) had a formative impact on the development of Urdu drama.

Mohammad Hasan (b. 1926) came later but was most consistent. His radio plays centred round socio-psychological problems. Even when he wrote in a lighter vein, he passed some valid moral strictures. Though simple in texture, his language remained deeply steeped in the romantic traditions of Urdu fiction. Perhaps, it was necessitated by some of the archaic situations and ideas that came into conflict in his plays. Slowly but steadily he moved to the stage. First he tried his hand at period plays and used his socio-historical knowledge of his subject-matter in producing an authentic cultural atmosphere and visuals in a receding feudal world. That is fully borne out by his play *Tamāśā Aur Tamāśai* (The Play and the Spectator) staged during the Ghalib centenary, when in a situation of mushroom eruption of Ghalib plays, another valid and relevant effort came from Habib Tanveer who had, for the last few years, been totally involved in *Catīsgarhi* folk presentations, including the very impressive production of *Caraṇ Dās Cor* (1975). Mohammad Hasan's best work came in 1977 when he published *Zohak* based on a parable of the Middle East. Potentially, it is a powerful theme and its choice speaks of the playwright's dramatic perception. It needs to be retold. In the time of Jamshed, a young prince, Zohak, annexes the throne after slaying his father at the instigation of the Devil and, thus, becomes the very incarnation of Evil. In sheer delight the Devil kisses him on both his shoulders. And from the two points of contact two snakes slither forth sucking the blood of Zohak the Evil, by day and night. In his insufferable agony, Zohak pleads for mercy and salvation. Even the best of fencers fail to provide relief, for everytime they cut down the pair of snakes, another pair slithers forth and takes over. The Devil again appears disguised as a physician and prescribes two human heads everyday to be offered to the snakes to feast on. For as long as they would feast, the king would be relieved of the torture. And with this begins the hunt for two victims everyday to be offered to the snakes so that the king may rule in peace. So begins the process of a long travail for the people whose destiny he holds to ransom.

As a theme, it has a pointed relevance to every situation of autocratic tyranny and human suffering. To that extent Mohammad Hasan succeeds in making use of the powerful theme. He should have further ensured the development of this theme on stage with enacted visuals, which he does not, and, thereby, blunts the very edge of the razor he wields with so much of promise.

In between figure the seasonal playwrights who come and go with the celebrations of jubilees. Their approach is illustrative and the best they have so far achieved is something in the fashion of farcical tableau. This happened when

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Sayed Mohammad Mehdi presented his *Ghalib Ke Udenge Purze* (Ghalib Shall be Damned, 1974) produced by IPTA and *Ghalib Kaun Hai?* (Who is Ghalib?, 1973) produced by Shiela Bhatia of the Delhi Art Theatre.

Zahida Zaidi. But beyond this trend in Urdu very few playwrights with a modern sensibility have emerged on the scene. Among them Zahida Zaidi (b. 1928) and Sagar Sarhadi (b. 1926) stand out. Zahida started nearly a decade and a half ago with her translations of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* (*Cherry Ke Bāgh*) and *Three Sisters* (*Tīn Bahnen*) and the latter play's production in Aligarh. While her embellished and awkward prose failed to grasp and convey the Chekhovian vision and texture of socio-psychological tensions and his lyrical simplicity of prose, she succeeded in conveying the inner meaning of plays like Manuel de Pedrolo's *The Room* (*Kamra*) and Eugene Ionesco's *Exit the King* through a more controlled idiom and easy flow of language. Having tempered her pen through the translations of modern western plays, she ultimately thought of writing plays herself. She has given us, over the last few years, plays like *Cattan* (The Rock), which she dubs a dream play, *Dil-i-Nasobūr Daram* (O My Restless Heart) and *Dūsra Kamra* (The Other Room).

The first one, her dream play, which, through the metaphor of enactment on an unrealistic location, brings out man's quest for fulfilment and compensation for the inadequacies of life. Through its own logic, it forces constant readjustments and reorientations in human realities. Nothing of life seems real but for its inherent anxieties.

The second play *Dil-i-Nasobūr Daram* seems to be somewhat in the nature of classical delineation of idealistic human personalities craving for perfection. The qualities which can bring about that human perfection and aesthetic repose, seep into a plurality of existence only to underline its incongruities. Though the author calls it a symbolic and surrealistic play, it reads like a page from the old and hackneyed fictional discourse, lacking in stage-worthiness.

The only play where she is in full control of her medium is *Dūsra Kamra*. Though too much of situational similarity between Zahida's play and Eugene Ionesco's *Amedee* (How to Get Rid Of It?) is easily discernible, it remains very much her work in its structural development and metaphorical pattern. It is not a question of substituting 'geometrical progression' with arithmetical multiplication. In *Amedee* the dead body in the other room grows in size and ultimately breaks through the wall. Here the number of dead bodies go on multiplying in the next room. Though Zahida's play never gains that height of intense weirdness, it is able to convey a mysteriousness of a grotesque situation.

Sagar Sarhadi. Unlike Zahida Zaidi, whose approach is 'symbolic and surrealisitc', Sagar Sarhadi emerges as a realistic playwright without pretensions. Structurally, his plays are straightforward and unambiguous. An author of plays like *Bhūke Bhajan Na Hoviay Gopāla* (No Song On a Hungry Stomach, My Friend!), *Ek Ṣām Aur Guzar Gai* (Another Evening Ends), *Sarīta Ke Nam* (To Sareeta) and *Tanhāī* (Loneliness), he has succeeded in focusing his attention on human relations made or destroyed by circumstances. His *Tanhāī* gives a fuller expression of a happening in human terms. Vanita, the mother of Bharat, has abandoned her heyday in the show-world. The decay comes with all its savage irony. The mother-son estrangement is bitter. The son is at the threshold of self-realization while the mother is still craving to go back to the glory that was. Nothing comes of it except more bitterness, more disillusionment. At the end Vanita addresses her son: 'Don't you smell the heart of fire, Bharat? I am suffocating. Come, let's, mother and son, go away. To some unknown place. Why are the curtains aflutter? I dread the ghost....' That's her life at its final reckoning. Her youth, her charm, her popularity—everything is gone with the spring breeze. And, now, here is the autumn....It jolts one out of a stupor. Sagar Sarhadi's handling of the situation and characters in this play is astute and holds promise for the future.

Other Modern Playwrights. Sajida Zaidi (b. 1926), essentially a poet, who came to Urdu drama with very uncertain experimental efforts like *Āo, Ḍraiviṅ Sikhāo* (Come, Teach Me Driving) fumbled in her later attempts because of her poetic verbosity which she has allowed to corrode her dramatic vocabulary. Her play in verse (1977) reads better because it provides partial justification for that kind of language which needs judicious pruning before it can become part of imaginative prose. But in her adaptation of Lorca's play *Yerma* as *Mamta Ki Ag*, in spite of its pedestrian title, she is able to minimize the handicap which calls for conscious efforts to overcome this weakness. Her treatment of the psychological dimensions of the play is effective. The sting is in the Indian Yerma being convinced that her man is fully virile and her womb is fertile enough to accept his seed. The denial of the joy and the sense of fulfilment as mother is too much for her. Sajida amply conveys the idea through the development of her characters in this original situation, when the Indian Yerma strangulates her love in a fit of violence.

As this survey reaches its conclusion, it becomes necessary to make a factual mention of some works of this surveyor without attempting any value assessment. Anwar Azeem (b. 1928) whose earliest radio plays were broadcast in 1951–52, and whose play, *Kūc* (The Trek, 1953) was included in the collection, *Hundred Years of Urdu Drama* (1960s), edited by Kamal Rizvi of Lahore, turned to vigorous playwriting in 1969 and ever since has turned out a number of full-length plays as also radio and TV scripts. To mention a few published ones: *Āvāzon Ke Qaidi* (Prisoners of Voice

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1969), *Rāt Ke Rāhī* (Travellers in the Night, 1970), *Jāney Pahcāney Añjāney* (The Known Strangers, 1971), *Gol Kamra* (The Circular Room, 1974); also translations and adaptations like Gorky's five major plays including *The Lower Depths* (*Pātāl*, 1958), Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, Gorky's *The Mother* (*Sūraj Ka Safar*) and *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (*Zaval Ka Orūj*).

The bane of Urdu drama is the superstructural delusions which continue to plague the medium. The playwright is more concerned with proving his or her existentialist, absurdist, symbolist, modern image than mastering the medium to project a down-to-earth life experience. Urdu drama has to liberate itself from the elitist rigmarole before it can hope to create a true and viable work of art which puts across the trauma of the age, and thus sublimate itself in a vision of tomorrow.

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Section 6
NOVEL

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Introduction

V. V. JOHN

The Indian novel is not more than a hundred years old. Literary historians are agreed that it owed more to western models and influence than to the classical Indian tradition. Though the term *Kādambari*, applied to the novel in more than one Indian language, might suggest a derivation from the Sanskrit narrative work of that name, no novelist or critic has seriously looked back to the Sanskrit narrative tradition as having provided the inspiration for the 'new kind of story'—which was how Appu Nedungadi, the author of the first Malayalam novel, *Kundalata* (1887), described his work. Even the few Sanskrit novels that enthusiasts have produced in the recent past do not invoke any ancient Sanskrit models but acknowledge the foreign source of their inspiration.

It is possible, however, to maintain that even if the British were not around in the 19th century and novels in English and other European languages had not arrived in the country, the time was ripe for the emergence of a new kind of story, owing to the emergence of a new breed of readers. In the West, cultural historians point to the industrial revolution and the breakdown of feudal structures as having provided material for the writer, that could not be dealt with appropriately in the epic or in the romantic lay. India did not have an industrial revolution. But the 19th century saw social changes that called for a different kind of cultural documentation from what the poets could provide. There was also emerging slowly a reading public, though not very large, that was not looking for high learning and edification, but for plain entertainment and relaxation.

The influence of western fiction began with translations, imitations and adaptations both acknowledged and unacknowledged. A study of trends would be possible by looking at the list of novels chosen for translation or adaptation. It might seem at first glance that a certain deep earnestness rather than the quest for mere entertainment inspired these early translations. They included *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Rasselas* and *Sandford and Merton*. It was, however, not long before the producer of fiction discovered what the readers were waiting for. They were waiting for G. W. M. Reynolds! The popularity of this writer in India long after he had gone out of print and been forgotten in England is an interesting phenomenon. In a compendium of English literary history written by Stopford A. Brooke in the beginning of this century, Reynolds rated a brief mention as having been widely read by housemaids. Meanwhile, a Madras publisher was making money by putting out untidy reprints of his novels which were read by somewhat better educated Indians. One addict was so captivated that he gave the novelist's name to his first-born. Meanwhile, translations were produced in several Indian languages of *The Mysteries of the Court of London* and some other productions of this prolific writer. After a while, enthusiasm shifted to Marie Correlli who also found many translators in India. The English clientele of these writers are now fed by the vast output published by Mills & Boon. These, though widely read in India, are no longer translated, for we have established a sort of self-sufficiency in slop.

Adaptations of novels from other languages were for some time deemed to be a legiti-

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mate way of making up for the shortage of fiction in each language. In doing this, not much attention was paid to bibliographic and literary proprieties. In Malayalam, for instance, an unacknowledged adaptation of *Les Miserables* was serialized in a distinguished newspaper and later published in book form, long before Nalappat Narayana Menon published his authoritative version. Among novels that received the same treatment of dubious naturalization in Malayalam were *The Count of Monte Cristo* and several novels of Mrs Henry Wood. Only one of her novels, *East Lynne*, was favoured with a straight translation. Pundit Godavarish Mishra, in Oriya, borrowed from western sources the plots of the four novels he wrote, but the quality of his style and the ingenuity employed in the adaptation made them clearly distinguishable from original creations. The most successful of his novels, *Aṭharaśa Satara*, dealt with the Paik rebellion, and freely made use of the plot of *A Tale of Two Cities*. *Ghaṭāntara* made use of the plot of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Abhāgini* that of *Les Miserables*; though the author acknowledged that he took the plot of *Nirbāsita* from a foreign novel, he did not disclose its name.

Adaptations, whether acknowledged or otherwise, are no longer in vogue, but translations have become more plentiful and are undertaken by experts. The acme of this trend is perhaps represented by the translations of *War and Peace* in some of the Indian languages. Other notable translations include the novels of Dostoevsky, Anatole France and Maxim Gorky. The more ambitious translations have been undertaken in just those languages where the production of original novels has also been more plentiful than in the other languages. These languages have also been prompt in responding to the vogue of bestsellers like *Doctor Zhivago* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, by producing what could be called instant translations.

The translators did not confine their attention to foreign authors. Among the most widely translated authors were Bankim Chandra Chatterji and Sarat Chandra Chatterji, and latterly, Premchand. We look back with some incredulity at the immense vogue of Bankim's *Durgeśa Nandini*, a highly contrived, pseudo-historical romance. Bankim blandly dismissed criticism of the historical setting of his fiction by declaring, 'A novelist should concern himself with inner matters, not with history.' One doubts whether his handling of inner matters was particularly skilful. Sarat Chandra Chatterji, who was also widely translated, particularly his *Śrīkānta*, strikes one today as excessively naive, and Manabendra Bandyopadhyaya puts it in the following words, 'His prostitutes are always victims of circumstance and actually chaste at heart.' With Premchand's *Godān*, we are no longer in the land of formula fiction, but in the presence of one of the masterpieces of the world's literature. There is no romanticizing, no shirking of disturbing reality, and no shrieking expressions of rage. After him, the Hindi novelist could no longer present fantasy as a substitute for reality. The addicts of fantasy opted to write for the films and the pulp fiction market, and do not have to be taken seriously.

Even more than translations, the foreign influence currently reflected in the Indian novel relates to the innovations that have come into European and American fiction as a result of modern advances in psychology and in the arts of verbal communication. The avid novel reader even tends to detect foreign influence where there is none. A few weeks before his death, when the famous novelist Uroob was asked whether echoes from Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* had influenced the texture of *Ammiṇi*, he replied that he had never read the Bronte novel. Yet there were at least two characters in Uroob's novel that resembled Heathcliff and Catherine. So one cannot be absolutely sure about borrowings and influences, though echoes of great novels can be felt in Indian fiction; for instance, the Kannada novelist P. Lankesh's debt to *Catcher in the Rye* (Salinger) in his novel *Biruku*.

News of the new apocalypse in the novel was not long in reaching our shores. Henry James had at the turn of the century remarked that the novel had 'arrived late at self-consciousness, but it had done its utmost ever since to make up for lost opportunities'. The West has reached a point in the realm of the novel, where John Hawkes could

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jauntily declare: 'The true enemies of the novel were plot, character, setting and theme'. The modernist situation in the west is vividly implied in the title of an article by Philip Stevik: 'Scheherezade runs out of plots, goes on talking; the King, puzzled, listens'. The impression sought to be conveyed is that whatever plot could do to sustain the novel has long been accomplished and exhausted. One recalls the arduous labours of the German scholar who examined the plots of all the fiction in the world and arrived at the conclusion that there really were only 36 plots in all the world's fiction, and the seemingly infinite variety offered to the reading public was no more than skilful permutation.

That the uncritical public would avidly lap up the old brew under fresh labels, should be evident to anyone who has examined the fiction on which the average Indian feature film is based. The cognoscenti may be aware of the endless repetition, but the general public, on being warned that 'we have been here before', would blandly answer, 'We like it here, and that's why we are here again.' This exchange is wholly devoid of any literary significance.

The first escape from the predicament of Scheherezade was offered to the West by the possibilities of exploring the states of mind of the characters involved, and these explorations, often called the stream of consciousness, were made possible, and in many instances plausible, through the advances made in psychology. The great novelists were not unaware that the most exciting and disturbing things that happen to people, did so in their minds. This truth was explicitly exploited by writers like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, who were otherwise dissimilar in their approach to fiction. Both these writers found many disciples among Indian novelists. What the novelist was doing along these new paths was not only capitalizing on advances in psychology, but also making use of the knowledge that in drama, the transition from the cloak-and-dagger and blood-and-thunder style of primitive mimes to modern stage representation came through the realization that the conflict that sustains great drama is internal rather than external. The bond that holds the story together in the major novels of Agyeya and Buddhadeva Bose, to mention two instances, is the bond provided by 'the journey inwards', and not external events. Agyeya's *Shekhar: Ek Jivani* is described by the author himself as 'a most intimate personal document of an individual', and marks a deliberate shift of emphasis from society to the individual. We are presented with 'the acute tension between the inner and the outer self of the individual and the resultant tragedy of modern man'. A somewhat different technique is employed by Nirmal Verma who deals with situations that are seemingly trivial in themselves, but whose atmosphere and verbal magic, stay to haunt the mind of the reader.

The innovators that have gone their own way and succeeded are not too many. Writing on the Bengali novel, which was among the first to employ the technique of the stream of consciousness and the agonies of commitment, Manabendra Bandyopadhyaya, in the article contributed by him, has words of caution for the earnest student of fiction. He tells us, with reference to the modish disquiet of some writers, that 'their problems and psychological hang-ups were directly imported from the bargain basements of cheap western novels'. We might even be tempted to hazard the opinion, echoing the wistful yearnings elsewhere for the Great American novel, that the genuinely Great Indian novel is yet to be written.

Among the most self-conscious practitioners of this literary form should be reckoned the Kannada writers of the last two or three decades. Among them, those that belonged to the *Navya* movement were the most innovative. They marked a departure from the writers of the *Navodaya* school who set out to teach, and from the *Pragatiśila* writers who sought a social revolution. The *Navya* writers, 'sick of the hypocrisy of the professed apostles of service and morality', and 'suspicious of their own enthusiasm and the panaceas of others', adopted an introspective and ironical approach and abandoned 'the familiar notion that the novel tells a story, with a beginning, a middle and an end'. They were thus keen on inventing 'the open novel'. They were influenced by Eliot, the theatre of the Absurd, Kafka and Camus. But they produced only a few novels.

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A certain prolixity is associated with the output of most major novelists, but there are writers who have poured the essence of their genius into one or two novels, often using other media for the rest of their literary output. Ananthamurthy stirred up the Kannada literary world with his *Samskāra*, and seems to hesitate to return to the novel form. Umashankar Joshi, in Gujarati, did his major work in poetry, but produced one novel, *Parikām Jaṇyām*, which has indicated what a poet could do when he makes the journey inwards through venues other than those provided by poetry.

Mention of this Gujarati writer also reminds one of a point that has not been made earlier in this essay, but is several times stressed in the articles that follow. I refer to the influence of Mahatma Gandhi on the development of the novel in India. One would not ordinarily associate Gandhiji's name with any major developments in imaginative literature. But as the following pages make clear, the novelists were influenced by Gandhiji both in regard to the themes they chose and the language they wrote. The simple language into which he poured his thoughts proved to be the kind that could be as appealing in popular fiction as in political propaganda. And Gandhiji's concern for the common people was akin to the concern that the novelist filled his mind with, as the genre moved from the realms of fantasy and romance into those of the workaday world.

The road that the novel has traversed in the hundred years since the Tamil pioneer, Vedanayakam Pillai, wrote his *Pratāpa Mudaliār Caritram* in 1879, would become clear if one glances at the preface he wrote in English to the first novel in Tamil: 'In writing this story, I have not followed the example of those novelists who depict human nature as it is, not as it ought to be, and who thus exhibit bad specimens of humanity which are often mistaken by the young and inexperienced for objects of imitation. I have represented the principal personages as perfectly virtuous in accordance with the opinion of the great English moralist, Dr Johnson.' We have left this arrogance far behind. We have not arrived at new certainties. Considering the quality of thinking that seems to pass muster these days, this is just as well.

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Assamese

SATYENDRANATH SARMA

The Assamese novel, like all other branches of modern literature, is a product of the 19th century, developing mainly as the result of the impact of western literature. Until then Assamese literature mainly dealt with the superhuman exploits and divine love of gods, demi-gods and epic heroes and these metrical romances had very little to do with the everyday realities of life. The Assamese term for the novel is *upanyās* (upanyāsa) a term which has been in use since the last decade of the 19th century, when the real history of the Assamese novel starts. Prior to that the Christian missionary writers used the term *kathā* to describe their longer narrative stories. The word *upanyās* was probably borrowed from Bengali literature, which used the word to describe this new development in Indian literature.

The Early Novels

The missionary writers introduced prose fiction in Assamese literature, but, as was only to be expected, it was writing with a Christian bias. *Kāminikāntar Caritra* (The Story of Kaminikanta, 1877), *Elokeśī Vesyār Kathā* (The Story of the Prostitute Elokesi, 1877) and *Phulmaṇi Āru Karuṇā* (The Story of Phulmani and Karuna, 1877) written by American Baptist missionaries, did not contain all the elements of the novel; nevertheless they paved the way for the Assamese novel. *Sudharmār Upākhyān* (The Story of Sudharma, 1884) by Padmavati Debi Phukanani (Padmavati Debī Phuknanī, 1853–1930), is about two pairs of lovers whose romances are affected by severe vicissitudes, both credible and incredible; but judged from the point of view of technique or plot construction, this work cannot be called a true novel.

Towards the last decade of the 19th century, however, there emerged a new set of writers from among the contributors to the monthly magazines *Jonāki* (1889) and *Bijulī* (1890) and they laid the foundation for the Assamese novel. Padmanath Gohain Barua (Padmānāth Gohāin Baruvā, 1871–1946) and Rajanikanta Bardoloi (Rajanīkanta Bardoloi, 1868–1939) were the two writers who contributed most to this foundation. Barua's novels were the first to be recognized as a distinctive form of Assamese literature. His *Bhānumatī* (1890) and *Lāharī* (1891), set against the historical background of the 18th and 19th centuries respectively, are laudable attempts at handling plot and character. Though the stories are historical, the principal characters and their actions are creations of the novelist. Based on love themes, the novels portray the heroines more sympathetically than the heroes. Rajanikanta Bardoloi, very often acclaimed as the Walter Scott or Bankimchandra of Assam, is said to have taken a vow during his student days that he would enrich Assamese literature with a series of historical novels like those of Scott and Bankimchandra Chatterjee. He tried to live up to his promise by contributing seven historical novels and one social novel dealing with a tribal society of eastern Assam. His historical novels, beginning with *Manomatī* (1900), are *Rangilī* (1925), *Rahdoi-Ligirī* (Rahdoi, the Court Maid, 1930), *Nirmal Bhakat* (1925), *Tamreśvarī-Mandir* (The Temple of Tamreswari, 1926), *Danduvā-droh* (Danduva Insurrection, 1928) and *Rādhā-Rukminī* (Radha and Rukmini, 1925). His only socio-regional novel, *Miri Jiyarī* (The Miri Girl, 1894), narrates the tragic story of a pair of lovers belonging to the Miri or Mishing tribe of north-eastern Assam. It is not only a sensitive portrayal of steadfast love but is also a faithful description of a tribal community.

The plots of Bardoloi's historical novels are set against the decadent backdrop of the last part of Ahom rule in Assam. The period he deals with is only the last quarter of the 18th century and, therefore, Assamese society in his novels does not differ very much from the one he knew in his youth. The principal characters and the plots of most of his novels are his own creations, but the backgrounds and some characters vitally affecting the flow of events are derived from history. The idealized love that unsophisticated village youths and maidens have for each other is the central theme in most of his works. Faithlessness, adultery, etc. are alien to Bardoloi's concept of love. Like Gohain Barua, he too shows greater sympathy for his

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heroines and depicts them in his novels as having more initiative and drive than their lovers. Bardoloi, through his historical works of fiction, seeks to draw the attention of his readers to the historical verdict that even a mighty political power, like that of the Ahoms, cannot expect to remain in power and maintain its independence if its officers, nobles and princes indulge in internecine quarrels, display jealousy and hunger for power. Bardoloi's novels, however, suffer from one serious defect: this is his obsession with religious ideals and dogmas. He very often digresses into rigmaroles on socio-religious tenets and practices. Bardoloi's style of writing is lucid, simple and devoid of any artificial ornamentation.

The most popular and the best written historical novel of Bardoloi is *Manomati* set against the background of the Burmese invasion of Assam and the consequent insecurity of the people. The novel deals with the love of Laksmikanta and Manomati who belong to traditionally rival families like those of Romeo and Juliet. A subordinate love story runs parallel to the main love story. The heroism of Laksmikanta, the womanly virtues and dignity of Manomati and the quick-witted and gay character of Pamila, who loves Santiram depicted in the secondary love story are strikingly brought out in this novel which shows the influence of Scott's *Ivanhoe* and Bankimchandra's *Durgeśnandini* in certain scenes.

After Bardoloi a few writers tried their hand at historical novels, but without appreciable success. So, during the pre-Independence period, the historical novel found only one worthy exponent who could really unravel some phases of Assam's history by teaming fictional with real characters.

The Social Novel. The growth and popularity of the novel in any language is closely connected with the emergence of an urban middle-class population. The Bengali novel developed earlier only because of the rise of the middle class in and around Calcutta. Assam, which came under British rule much later than other parts of India, unfortunately, did not produce an urban bourgeois or middle class, being industrially and educationally backward, till the fifth decade of the 20th century. There was hardly a town with over 30,000 population in Assam before the Second World War. Under the circumstances, the development of the novel in Assam was tardy.

The social novel, dealing with social life and the problems of everyday life, firmly established itself only in the third decade of the present century, but its real beginnings were in the twenties. Dandinath Kalita (Daṇḍināth Kalitā, 1890–1955) launched his career as a novelist in 1908, but his noteworthy works came later, with *Sādhanā* (1929), *Paricaya* (Introduction, 1948) and *Āviṣkār* (Discovery, 1948). They, on the whole, exhibit a social bias and advocate social reforms. The leading characters of *Sādhanā* and *Āviṣkār*, Dinabandhu and Madhava respectively, modelled after the Gandhians, sacrifice their personal comfort and happiness at the altar of social purification. Two of the leading female characters, Rambha and Pratima, represent the problem of fallen women generally looked down upon by society. On the other hand, the heroines, Prabha and Malavika of *Sādhanā* and *Āviṣkār* respectively, are partially emancipated women who have taken active part in the works of social reconstruction. The novelist also advocates the emancipation of woman from male domination.

The reformative zeal to reorganize society on Gandhian lines has also coloured the approach of Daibachandra Talukdar (Daivacandra Tālukdār, 1900–67) who tried his skill in poetry, fiction and drama, but could not rise above mediocrity. He has to his credit no less than six social novels, commencing with *Dhuvāli-kuvāli* (Dusty Atmosphere, 1922). The Gandhian liberation movement and its concomitants, such as the development of cottage industry, removal of untouchability, enforcement of prohibition etc. have been frequently interpolated in his plots with the result that the flow of action is frequently retarded and the plots become somewhat artificial. Talukdar's successful novel *Apūrṇa* (Unfulfilled, 1931) narrates the tragic story of an educated young man, Premadhar, a Gandhian idealist, who dies as a result of the mental agony caused by his betrayal of the golden-hearted Purnima, whom he deserts for the sophisticated urbanite Hemaprabha.

In contrast with the reformative novels of Dandinath Kalita and Daibachandra Talukdar, the novels of Dinanath Sarma (Dīnanāth Śarmā, b. 1916), who published his first two works as a serial in a monthly magazine in the last years of the thirties, reveal an individual's maladjustment to his surroundings and the psychological conflicts in his mind. Dinanath's fiction turns conflict inward. The influence of Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* is obvious in *Saṅgrām* (Struggle).

The most outstanding social novel of pre-Independence days is Bina Barua's (Vīnā Baruvā, 1910–64) *Jīvanar Bāṭat* (On the Path of Life, 1945). It gives a graphic, authentic picture of rural and semi-urban life in Assam. The novel's central character is an accomplished village maiden whose love and frustration, hopes and disillusionment, happiness and pathos are narrated against the background of the Assamese social environment. The novelist reveals his power of minute observation, appreciation and understanding of Assamese life and society. The plot is not a complex one. In bare outline the story is given below:

Kamalakanta, an educated young man, while attending a marriage at his friend's house, falls in love with a beautiful girl. Before his departure from the village Kamalakanta presents her with a signet ring, professing his love and assuring her that a formal marriage proposal would reach her. But the subsequent turn of events completely reverses their plans. Kamalakanta marries Suprabha, the daughter

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of a Rai Bahadur, to boost his prospects in Government service. The poor village maiden, Tagar (the name of a kind of sweet-scented flower), thus spurned, has to marry an honest young man Dharani, a minor official in the Weaving Department. The rest of the story meanders unevenly through a setting of poverty, social prejudice, political agitation and domestic tragedy. Dharani dies of consumption after having been gaoled for taking part in the non-co-operation movement. His wife is left to eke out a livelihood by her weaving skill. She also teaches weaving to the wife of the newly posted Deputy Collector. Tagar is suspected of pilfering some ornaments from the house of the Deputy Collector. Her house is raided by the police and they recover a ring embossed with the initials of the Deputy Collector. She is taken to his house with the ring but at the sight of the woman whom he had betrayed years ago the Deputy Collector faints.

This, in a sense, is a 20th-century version of Kalidasa's immortal classic *Śākuntalam*, with the difference that the novel ends on a tragic note. The archetype of the signet ring is employed here in a new context.

Post-Independence Novels

The war years saw a slump in the production of literature. The Japanese advanced as far as Nagaland, then a part of Assam, and converted the entire north-eastern region of India into a base camp. Life and property became unsafe; there was great scarcity of food and other essential goods. Then, in 1947, came freedom, leaving a few bad legacies such as the partition of the country, communal holocausts and the migration of a population which shook India to its very foundations. Assam had to shelter several lakhs of refugees from East Bengal (later Bangladesh). Naturally, all these happenings affected the society adversely and dampened the enthusiasm of the litterateurs and publishers. Many of them had earnestly believed that freedom from foreign rule would usher in an era of plenty, that the country would be free from exploitation, social injustice, inequality, caste distinction and untouchability. Instead they saw only half-hearted attempts to do away with these evils. This initial shock of the shattering of their hopes was, however, overcome towards the middle of the fifties from whence there has been a regular output of readable novels.

Some popular novels were, no doubt, produced between 1947 and 1954, by Md. Piar and Premnarayan Datta, but their literary merit and appeal were limited. It was only after 1950 that the gloomy literary weather gradually became clearer with the rapid expansion of education and the increase of publishing firms in Assam.

In spite of the tardiness of economic and social development, certain changes in all spheres of life have been clearly perceived during the last three decades. The working class is becoming more and more assertive. The joint family system is disintegrating. The old faith in religious beliefs has been badly shaken and a materialistic outlook is gradually gaining ground. And women, now partially emancipated, are taking an increasing part in social and national activities. All these phenomena are more or less reflected in the novels of the post-Independence period. The influence of modern psychology, particularly that of Sigmund Freud, is clearly noticed in the treatment of character. The traditional values of life have also been gradually eroded with the new generation, intellectually nourished by the West, refusing to accept the relevance of these values. Assam, so long industrially backward, is also slowly moving towards industrialization and urbanization. During the fifties and sixties there has been a steady flow of villagers to the urban areas, creating new socio-political problems. All these phenomena, in addition to the age-old themes of love, jealousy, hatred and conflict have been the subjects of novels of the last thirty years. In some novels the veneer of social life is very thin, the works being more concerned with individual psychology and motivation.

The social novel in Assamese after Independence may be categorized as (i) socio-economic novels, (ii) novels dealing with domestic life and individual psychology and motivation and (iii) regional novels. The above subdivisions are not watertight compartments; they are classified for the convenience of discussion on the basis of the main features.

Socio-Economic Novels

In these novels, the writers do not merely want to tell a story about people, their joys and sorrows; they want to fulfil a social obligation as well by focussing attention on social problems and sometimes suggesting the remedies. The first novelist of this type is Hitesh Deka (Hiteś Dekā, b. 1924), whose *Ājir Māhuh* (Man of Today, 1952) reveals a writer quite at home with rural problems. His subsequent novels, some of which are voluminous, do not impress because of the writer's tendency to subordinate the story to his pet ideals.

Two important novels, *Cāknaiyā* (Whirlpool) and *Kapiliparīyā Sādhu* (The Story on the Bank of the River Kapili), appeared in 1954. The former, written by Radhikamohan Goswami (Rādhikāmohan Gosvāmī, b. 1906), an established short-story writer of the pre-Independence period, exhibits the hollowness and discrepancy between professed ideals and the actual deeds of modern society. The protagonist, Vivek, a young man of character and integrity, is a total misfit in an urban society where, beneath the veneer of sophistication, there lies the rotten desire and quest for property and sensual pleasure. Vivek, though disappointed, is not frustrated; he wants to continue his struggle to restore human dignity. As for *Kapiliparīyā Sādhu* by Nabakanta Barua (Navakānta Baruvā, b. 1926),

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this work will be discussed in the section dealing with the regional novel.

Dinanath Sarma first appeared as a novelist and story writer during the war years. He has written half a dozen social novels of which *Nadāi* (1956), a novel of robust optimism and vigour, merits notice. It is the story of a farmer, Nadai, who, like the hero of Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* or of Knut Hamsun's *Growth of the Soil*, struggles manfully against heavy odds to eke out his living from the good earth and finally succeeds in establishing himself as a progressive farmer. The novel also depicts the conflict between an agrarian society and emerging urbanization. His other works deal mostly with love and the aspirations and frustrations of the lower middle class.

Syed Abdul Malik (b. 1919) embarked on a literary career in the late thirties as a short-story writer, which he continued to be till the mid-fifties, when he switched to novel writing. Since then, he has published around twenty novels about both the urban and rural life in Assam. His characters are drawn from various cross-sections of society, from the lowliest of the low to the most sophisticated, from rustic villagers to well-bred romantic heroes. His plots are usually contrived and frequently have loose ends, but the magic of his expression and the dexterous twists in plot keep readers in suspense to the end. Love is the principal theme of Malik's novels. He has unbounded sympathy for the downtrodden, yet displays no deep hatred for the well-to-do in society. Of all his novels *Sūruymukhīr Svapna* (The Dream of the Sunflower, 1960) is definitely the most impressive. It deals with life in a Muslim village on the bank of the river Dhansiri, which sustains the people on the one hand but which occasionally becomes an instrument of devastation during the rains. The story of the novel is woven round the love of Tara and Gulach. The smooth course of love is interrupted by the deceitful manoeuvre of Kapahi, the thirty-year-old widowed stepmother who in bride's apparel marries Gulach by taking Tara's place. Gulach, apparently accepts the situation, but still yearns for Tara while looking for an opportunity to get rid of Kapahi. Kapahi offers Gulach the opportunity he seeks, when she takes up with another man. The story ends with the reunion of Tara and Gulach. Another important novel by Malik is *Ādhār Śilā* (Foundation Stone, 1968), which deals with the problem of illegitimacy in our conservative society. Here, the main character, an illegitimate issue, looked down upon by society, struggles manfully to establish his worth in society.

Jogesh Das (Yogeś Dās, b. 1927) has so far produced around a dozen social novels. His first published novel, *Dāvar Āru Nāi* (No More Clouds, 1955), achieved great success. It is a graphic account of the demoralizing and disruptive effect of the Second World War upon moral and ethical values in society during the days Assam served as a military base camp. Two contradictory sets of characters, one debased by the wartime social whirlpool and the other refusing to be carried along by the demoralizing current, are portrayed with a sure hand. *Cā Jui Khedi* (Will-o'-the-Wisp, 1969) impressively draws a sharp contrast between the life-styles of two sisters placed in diametrically opposite societies. One leads a placid, tension-free life, the other a restless life, chasing happiness like the will-o-the-wisp. In *Hejār Phul* (Thousand Blossoms, 1967) Das tellingly narrates the tragic efforts of an unwed mother to get recognition from society for herself and her grown-up children. In another novel, *Nedekhā Juir Dhovā* (Smoke of Unseen Fire, 1972), he presents the social phenomenon of the false sense of aristocracy in our society with its caste bias, which very often refuses to recognise ability, efficiency and strength of character in persons of lowly origin. Jogesh Das is noted for his sober approach to life and restrained narrative. His characters, based on personal experience and observations, are men and women of real flesh and blood. Without being cynical or virulently satirical, he sympathetically portrays the ills of society and projects the problems of the lower middle class.

Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya (Bīrendra Kumār Bhattācārya, b. 1924), a versatile writer, who has made novel-writing his profession, unfolds the deeds and behaviour of persons in unusual situations. Since 1957, when his socio-political novel *Rājpathe Ringiyāi* (The Call of the Highway) appeared, he has published about a dozen novels, some of which have been major successes. His *Iyaruingam* (People's Raj, 1960), *Śataghnī* (The Multi-pronged Weapon, 1965), *Mṛtuñjaya* (The Conqueror of Death, 1966), *Pratipad* (The New Moon, 1970) and *Kabar Āru Phul* (Sepulchre and Flowers, 1972) are portrayals of character in uncommon situations such as the Naga movement for independence under Phizo, the Indian national movement under the war conditions in 1942, the Chinese aggression in 1962, the struggle for independence in Bangladesh in 1971, and the total strike of the employees of the Assam Oil Company in Digboi. He is not easily carried away by emotion and tries to present a balanced view of life. In contrast to Abdul Malik's novels where love dominates, the novels of Bhattacharya are more concerned with men as a group or community, having a common ideal or motivation. Love is merely incidental. Disintegration of traditional village life is painted by Bhattacharya with an intimate brush in *Ā* (Mother, 1960). The character of the 'mother' here is reminiscent of a similar character in the Italian novel *Mother* by Grazia Deledda.

Lakshminandan Bora (Lakṣmīnandan Barā, b. 1931) and Padma Barkataki (Padma Barkaṭakī, b. 1928) have written a number of popular novels, of which only a few are really significant from the literary point of view. Barkataki, with journalistic enthusiasm, exposes the cupidity, hypocrisy and loss of integrity of the educated middle class. His *Mano* *Dāpoṇ* (Mirror of the Mind, 1959) is a powerful exposure of

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the sexual perversions of a section of the educated middle class. Familiarity with every aspect of rural Assamese life and the sensibility to paint these aspects in vivid colours, are the two assets of Bora. Like Barkataki he frequently indulges in sexual imagery, sometimes bordering on pornography. The moral degeneration of modern society, is fully exploited by Bora in most of his novels. His most successful novel is *Gaṅgā Cilanīr Pākhi* (Wings of the Hawk, 1963), which describes the pathetic attempts of a village maiden, agonizingly in love, to break family barriers and elope with her lover.

Homen Bargohain (Homen Bargohāin, b. 1931), a poet and short story writer, is also a powerful novelist. He touchingly narrates in *Subālā* (1963) the fate of a village maiden enticed into prostitution by unscrupulous people. Her pathetic attempts to start a new life as a chaste woman in married life are set to naught by her drunken husband. The novelist must have been inspired by Moravia or Goncourt to tackle this theme. Bargohain makes experiments in his important novel *Tāntrik* (1967) by using a thin story to explore the possibility of attaining super-sensual ecstasy through the medium of the bodily or sexual union. Here the writer follows D. H. Lawrence's view, 'Immortality, the heaven, is only a projection of this strange but actual fulfilment, here in the flesh' (*Manifesto*). The latest work of Bargohain, *Pitā-Putra* (Father and Sons, 1974), convincingly portrays the conflict of two generations, between a father and his sons. The great work of Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, probably supplied the initial idea, but in the detailed exposition Turgenev's influence is insignificant.

Mrs. Nirupama Bargohain (Nirupamā Bargohāin, b. 1932) the most prolific writer among the woman novelists, has demonstrated her proficiency in unfolding the character and psychological behaviour of women, and their actions and reactions under different circumstances. In most of her novels, some twelve in number, she has painted incidents and situations in family life with which the women of India are familiar. *Ejan Buḍhā Mānuh* (An Old Man, 1966), *Dinar Pācat Din* (Day after Day, 1968), *Sāmānya Asāmānya* (Ordinary and Extraordinary, 1971), *Kektācar Phul* (1973) are the other novels that present women of different temperaments, attitudes and upbringing in a perceptive manner. Navakanta Barua's *Kakādeutār Hār* (Bones of Forefathers, 1973) set in a feudal environment is a fine delineation of a family quarrel that led to tragic consequences.

Silabhadra's (Śīlabhadra, b. 1924) novels, though lacking in well-constructed plots, are nevertheless noteworthy for the manner in which the atmosphere of a particular region has been created by the author, who places a wide range of characters, with varied interests and different idiosyncratic traits, against the changing social backdrop. The characters appear within a very limited sphere, but leave an indelible impression on the minds of the readers. Chandraprasad Saikia's (Candraprasād Śaikiā, b. 1927) novels are generally marked by romantic idealism, being more concerned with individual hopes, aspirations and tragedies than with social consciousness. But in his latest novel, *Janmāntar* (Another Birth, 1977), Saikia has narrated the rise and fall of a well-to-do family in a village and in the process covers the entire gamut of village social life.

Besides the significant writers discussed above, quite a few other novelists, both young and experienced, have contributed much to the enrichment of the modern Assamese socio-economic novels.

Personal and Psychological Novels

Some novelists, instead of projecting characters as part of the socio-economic life, prefer to treat them as individuals, concentrating on their personal hopes and aspirations and not on their place in the social set-up and their consequent problems. Although the social backgrounds of these characters cannot be obliterated altogether or ignored, the emphasis in these novels is on bringing out the individual's reactions to situations and the psychological background to those reactions. A number of such analytical novels have been produced in Assamese without sacrificing literary quality.

Nirad Choudhuri (b. 1936), who has written a dozen short and medium-size novels, directs his attention mainly to unfold and analyze the psychological processes of several women characters in different trying situations. The apparent moral laxity in the conjugal life of an educated woman whose husband is a debauchee (*Nām Rākhilo Basavi*), the pathetic plight of a neglected wife whose husband is sexually attached to his sister-in-law (*Jaṭāyu*, 1971, the god of birds, in our epics), the predicament of the young wife of an aged man whose unmarried son is both the object of her sexual attraction and motherly affection (*Stabdha Vṛndāvana*, 1968), the sad but heroic attempt of a young woman, who knows herself to be illegitimate, to establish her identity in society even while refusing to marry the young man of her heart lest he suffer the same social ostracism (*Kālhīrā*, 1970) are some of the important themes unfolded with psychological insight.

Rohini Kakati (Rohiṇī Kakâti, b. 1931) is another novelist to forsake conventional plot. His technique of telling stories differs from novel to novel; sometimes the story is unfolded through nostalgic reminiscence (*Ek Nakṣatrar Niśā*—One-Starlit Night, 1964), sometimes each character reveals his own part in carrying forward the story (*Sūryarekhā*—Streaks of Sunshine, 1965) and sometimes different parts of the story are told through extracts from diaries, letters, etc. The earlier novels of Chandraprasad Saikia, *Sūryasnān* (Sunbath, 1958), *Mandākrāntā*, *Meghamallār* (an Indian raga, 1963) are also about individual hopes and aspirations, love and jealousy without any refer-

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ence to social, political or communal problems, but his later work shows his gradual involvement in social problems.

Some of the novels of the post-Independence period also deal with abnormal psychology, the repressed and suppressed desires and experiences of the unconscious. Among such novels are Syed Abdul Malik's *Triśūl* (1968), which is about a schizophrenic husband and wife who suffer from a sense of guilt about something supposed to have been committed in their childhood and *Kavitār Nām Lābhā* (The Poetry of Explosion, 1968), which deals with the sexual jealousy and paranoic behaviour of a sexually impotent husband; Padma Barkataki's *Duṣyantar Cumā* (The Kiss of Dushyanta, 1970), in which the main female character suffers from an Electra complex, and *Najvalā Dhūpar Itikathā* (The Story of Unburnt Incense, 1967), in which a sense of guilt drives the heroine into a state of dementia. Nirad Choudhuri narrates in his *Vanahaṁsa* (The Wild Duck), the story of a married woman who wants to retain her youthful beauty by depriving herself of motherhood: She holds her unwanted child responsible for the ebb of her youth and, in a spirit of vengeance not only neglects the child but sends her to a distant hostel.

The plot of *Emuṭhi Tārār Jilimili* (Twinkling of a Few Stars, 1965) is set in a mental hospital where a physician succeeds, through his investigations, in reconstructing the past histories of a number of inmates. The novelist dexterously links the individual histories into a harmonized plot, infusing the psychiatric case studies with flesh and blood. The same author, Kumar Kishore (Kumār Kiśore, b. 1928) successfully unfolds the story of a young woman who, in her sleep, attempts to injure herself with hairpins. Her unconscious act is due to a sense of guilt and her desire to punish herself for seriously injuring her lover several years earlier in a fit of anger. This psychological phenomenon is narrated in an elaborate story. This story and other similar novels, written to illustrate some psychological phenomenon, are contrived works designed to present various psychological concepts.

Regional Novels

The number of regional novels since 1960 has been increasing. During the entire pre-Independence period only one novel worth the name, *Miri-Jiyari*, was written and published. The regional novel can be subdivided into three categories, novels based on tribal life and society, novels focusing attention on the customs, manners, way of life, colloquialism, etc. of a non-tribal society, in a particular region, and novels based on the life of people inextricably connected with some rivers.

Among the tribal novels, the first one that comes to mind is *Iyaruingam*, a Naga word meaning people's reign. Traditional Naga social life and tribal beliefs, the new imported social and religious beliefs of the converted Christians, and the political movement for an independent Nagaland are all part of the background of a four-cornered love story involving Rishang, Phanitfang, Khutingla and Changrela. A few other novels based on Naga life have also been written by Kailash Sarma who has first-hand experience of Nagaland. *U-khun Jaṅgā* (The Chicken, 1973) by Amulya Barua is a Khasi tribal story that deals with the character and tragic end of a small Khasi boy in a remote village. The writer has succeeded in depicting the child's life as well as the Khasi village environment in which the boy grew up. Lummer Dai, an educated Adi tribal youth from Arunachal Pradesh, has written three novels in Assamese about the life and society of the Ādi (Abor.) community. Of the three, *Pṛthivīr Hāhī* (Smile of the Earth, 1963) is a perceptive portrayal of the Ādi people, whose individual and social life is considerably influenced by their traditional tribal institutions such as dormitories, tribal councils (*Kebāng*) and festivals. Women play a major role in their domestic life. The main plot is about a couple whose marital life comes to a tragic end due to the faithlessness, cruelty and devilish machinations of the husband.

In at least a dozen regional novels important rivers play a major role in the development of their plots. The first important novel of this type is, *Kapiliparīyā Sādhu* (The Story on the Banks of the Kapili, 1954). The main character Rupai's life is inextricably linked with the river. Similarly, Lakshmi, the heroine of *Sei Nadī Niravadhi* (This Eternal River, 1963) by Mrs Nirupama Bargohain, symbolizes the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of the river Pagaldia, a river of sorrow as well as an inexplicable attraction to the people living on its banks. Other rivers, such as Dhansiri, Sonai, Nakhanda, Kachikata and the mighty Brahmaputra, have also served as backgrounds and atmosphere for several novels.

Regional novels that concentrate on bringing into focus the way of life in a limited area or in a particular community, without sacrificing fictional appeal, include the outstanding work *Ei Padumani* (This is Padumani, 1965) by Amulya Barua. The story is set in a fishermen's village on the bank of the Brahmaputra. The colloquialisms, eccentricities, vulgarism and primary urges of the unlettered are faithfully recorded in a naturalistic manner. The story describes the frustrations, betrayal and final fulfilment in love of Phulbur, around whom are a host of characters contributing to the overall impact of the novel. Rasna Barua's (Rāsnā Baruā, pseud. Birinchi Kumar Barua, 1910–64) *Seuji Patar Kāhinī* (The Story of Green Leaves, 1959) portrays life in a tea garden and features a sparkling girl Chaniya, a tea-plucker of extraordinary vivacity. Silabhadra's *Madhupur* (1971) and Srimati Mamani Goswami's (Māmaṇi Gosvāmī, b. 1940) *Nīlakaṇṭhī Vraja* (Dark-throated Vrajadhām, 1976) are other noteworthy works in this genre. One general characteristic of this type of regional novel is the use of a large array of characters, so as to present the various shades

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of character in the society. Another feature of this type of novel is the use of the photographic technique in description.

Historical Novels

Historical themes did not attract the attention of novelists of the post-Independence era as much as social themes and problems did with the attainment of Independence. The urge to instil a sense of patriotism through historical episodes, with a view to buttressing a national movement for liberation, no longer existed, hence the paucity of historical novels.

The first historical novel after Independence was *Kono Khed Nāi* (With No Regret) by Padma Barkataki. This novel depicting the character of Queen Pramatheswari, alias Phuleswari, in a new light, was published in 1963. The life of the great poet-artist Jyotiprasad Agarwala (1903–51) inspired Syed Abdul Malik to undertake the ambitious project of writing *Rūp-Tīrthar Yātrī* (The Pilgrim to the Land of Beauty, in two parts, 1963, 1965) which is reminiscent of such novels as *The Moon and Six Pence* (Somerset Maugham) and *Lust for Life* (Irving Stone). *Sācipātar Puthi* (The Old Manuscript, 1973) is another novel with biographical materials. It deals with three important literary personalities of the 19th century.

One noticeable difference between the historical novels of the post-Independence days and those of the pre-Independence days is that whereas the novels of the earlier period utilised history mainly as background, assigning the real historical personages minor roles, the novels of recent times are historically more authentic in respect of plot and characterization. Even the prose style and idiosyncratic expressions of the medieval prose chronicles have been profitably utilized by novelists like Debendra Acharya and Trailokya Bhattacharya (b. 1938). The historical novels of the present decade have been trying to reproduce the historical atmosphere of the periods represented in the novels.

A few novels based on actual events during the struggle for Independence, especially the Quit India Movement of 1942, have recently been published. These have animated dramatic situations and added motivation. Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya's *Mṛtyuñjaya* and Pasupati Bharadvaja's (Pāśupati Bharadvāja, b. 1918) *Raṅgā Raṅgā Tez* (Red Blood, 1967) are the two notable works infused with the 'do or die' spirit of the revolutionary youths in the 1942 movement. The main incidents narrated in these stories are not imaginary ones, but real happenings which have been modified for literary purposes.

Translations

Although the concept of the novel was borrowed from western literature and English novelists like Walter Scott and Charles Dickens inspired the earlier generation of Assamese novelists, translations of foreign novels, excepting popular works like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels*, was not undertaken till the thirties. During the thirties until World War II, some important novels like Lytton's *Last Days of Pompeii*, Grazia Deledda's *Mother*, Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*, Anatole France's *Thais*, John Bojer's *Great Hunger*, Charles Reade's *The Cloister and the Hearth*, Gorky's *Mother* and a few novels of Mrs. Henry Wood were translated or adapted and published serially in magazines, some of them appearing later in book form. After Independence the tempo of translating novels increased considerably due to the encouragement of publishing houses. Russian novels of Tolstoy, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Sholokov and Pasternak were translated either in abridged or unabridged form. A few American novels, mainly selected from the works of Hemingway, Henry James, Steinbeck, Mark Twain and a few others, have been translated. Even controversial novels like D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, Moravia's *Woman of Rome* and Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* have been translated.

Although it is not possible to trace any direct influence of foreign novels on some of the recent Assamese novels, they certainly have helped in producing themes. The dominating role of rivers in some novels might have been inspired by the river Don in Sholokov's novels. Similarly the traditional rivalry and quarrel between two families, as narrated in the *Bride of Lammermoor* and *Romeo and Juliet* are often found in Assamese novels. The realism, naturalism and other techniques of expression found in western novels have also been fruitfully utilized in modern Assamese novels.

The influence of western novels in shaping the style of Assamese novels cannot be overlooked. The stream of consciousness and inner dialogue of James Joyce or Virginia Woolf have consciously or unconsciously contributed towards shaping the creative style of Saurabh Chaliha (Saurabh Calihā, b. 1927), a noted story writer in Assamese. Mahim Bora (Mahim Barā, b. 1926) and Nagen Saikia (Nagen Śaikīyā, b. 1939) have also used inner dialogues occasionally in their fiction. The philosophy of existentialism, originally propounded by Kierkegaard and later successfully utilised by French novelists Sartre and Camus, has also influenced Assamese writers like Polen Barkataki, Homen Bargohain and Syed Abdul Malik; *Ek Dadhīcir Anveṣanat* (In Quest of a Dadhici, 1973) *Timir-Tīrtha* (Dark Pilgrimage, 1973) and *Ekā Bekā Bṛtta* (Zig Zag Circle, 1975) are such experiments. In fact, several stories of Bargohain, according to the eminent Assamese critic T. N. Goswami, are coloured by existentialism.

Important Bengali novels by Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chandra Chatterji and by some contemporary novelists, have been translated. Under the auspices of the Sahitya Akademi, a few novels from other modern

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Indian languages have also been rendered into Assamese, including Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *Cemmīn*, Premchand's *Godān*, M. Bandyopadhyaya's *Padmā Nadir Mājhi*.

There is only one epistolary novel in Assamese and that is *Alakāloi Cithi* (Letters to Alaka, 1956) by Haliram Deka (1901–60), an established story-writer of the thirties. The entire novel being epistolary the characters are not boldly drawn.

Detective Novels

The educated Assamese of the earlier generation are more prone to read classical English detective novels, such as those of Conan Doyle, than works by modern writers like James Hadley Chase. But the modern detective novels are gradually getting more poular with readers. Those not well-conversant with English delighted in the Bengali detective novels of Dinendra Ray and others. The late Kumudeswar Barthakur published for the first time in the thirties an Assamese series, popularly known as the Golai Series, wherein the central character, a burglar named Golai, exhibited uncanny skill in committing burglaries wihout leaving any clue. A second series was started by Premnarayan Dutt in 1948 and about 30 novels were published in the *Pā-phu* series. These novels, though written in crime story style, are not devoid of idealism. The protagonists in this series, inspired by burning patriotism, want to establish an egalitarian society free from exploitation and oppression. A third detective series is at present gaining popularity among adolescents. This is the *Dasyu Bhāskar* series by Rabin Dey (1922–80). Here, the main character, Bhaskar, though apparently a dacoit, is really a friend of the poor, the oppressed and the exploited.

The Assamese novel, whatever its classification, has been making rapid strides after Independence.

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Bengali

MANABENDRA BANDYOPADHYAY

Concept of a Novel

'A prose narration of some length'—E. M. Forster thus quoted a French critic to define the novel in his Clark Lectures at Cambridge. For the 'some', he put down an arbitrary number, perhaps with tongue in cheek.

But this description arouses too many doubts. How then should one define *The Golden Ass*, *Daphne and Chloe*, *Genji Monogatari*, *Ching Pling Mei*, *Kādambarī* or even *Harṣacarita*? These written in prose tell a story (sometimes a story within a story), and are also of a certain length. If we call them novels, then with satisfaction we can boast that the novel as a literary form was not a gift to us from the West at all, and that India did not have to wait for her British rulers before producing a novel. We can add that Banabhatta and Lady Murasaki are fine examples of the fact that the telling of a long tale was an old and familiar trend in India and Japan. We can also draw attention to the fact that in some Indian languages (Marathi and Kannada), the novel is called 'Kādambarī'.

But the confusion starts when we consider Pushkin's delightful and exhilarating *Eugene Onegin*. This work is constructed in immaculate verse stanzas, with an intricate rhyme scheme. Yet Pushkin calls it a novel and there are no dissenting voices, even though the narrative is in verse. A comparable case in Bengali literature is Mukundaram's *Caṇḍīmaṅgal*. This work has always caused some uneasiness to its critics because though Mukundaram's work is composed in the *maṅgalkāvya* form of the Middle Ages, it cannot be described merely as a *maṅgalkāvya*

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To do so would be to obscure its unique qualities. This poet, whom some critics compare to Langland, does not seem to be satisfied by the rigid old form. Rather, it is as if he wants to write a proper novel but does not know how to start, having been unaware of what comprises a novel. One thing is apparent however, that the seams of the *maṅgalkāvya* form are slowly splitting. One good shake, and the old stitches would rip out, requiring the whole thing to be put together again in a new way. What then should *Caṇḍīmaṅgal* be called: a form of the *maṅgalkāvya* or the first attempts at the novel?

Before taking a decision regarding an acceptable definition of the novel, it should be borne in mind that no art form can be imposed. If that were possible, then one could confidently say, that a novel is 'a prose narrative of some length', putting emphasis on 'prose', 'narrative', and 'length'. All art must grope about before acquiring a structure, through the inseparable and organic union, as Croce said, between statement and perception. Kalidasa once described such a union in his *Raghuvamśa*.

If so, then it will be obvious that all forms of art change with the times. The force that engenders new art forms originates from the tension inherent in what an age thinks and how it does so. It has been said of Cervantes' *Don Quixote* that he looks back to the world of romance. On the other hand, Sancho Panza is looking forward to the future, perhaps even to that future which is the world of the novel. It ceases to matter whether or not a novel is written in prose; we assume, rather, that the ambit and atmosphere of any novel is that of a new and different world.

We can consider *Don Quixote* as a novel without getting involved in the controversy about art being mimetic or parodistic. This is because the novel form in the West was born when feudalism was giving way to the bourgeois system. The end of feudalism entailed a fundamental change in man's attitude towards life and the world.

Some critics have said that the novel is an extension of the epic form. In the age of the epic, or in the world of fairy-tales, nothing is fully defined. Who knows if a piece of stone is Ahalya or not? That lustful swan may be a god. A laurel leaf or a narcissus may once have been human beings. In fairytales, pumpkins turn into coaches and mice into horses. The ashes on Cinderella's gown disappear when she puts on the glass slipper. The *campā* and *pārul* flowers may actually be princes and princesses. But, though the novel is an evolution of the epic, its monsters remain unalterd monsters. Windmills stay windmills—always terrible, fearful and immutable. They have been defined and will remain windmills for ever.

Perhaps this state of affairs will change. Perhaps, the novel will wake up one morning and find, like Kafka's *Gregor Samsa*, that it has changed into a centipede. But for this metamorphosis, the epic form will have to advance two or three centuries from Cervantes' time. It will then record the collapse of bourgeois ideology rather than the development of bourgeois thought.

Thus the world of the novel is defined. This world is degraded and its human beings are individualists. It is both biography and chronicle, biography because it aims at depicting the life of one or more individuals, and chronicle because these individuals are the creation of a particular age and society. The narrative is usually that of an adventure or journey. 'A journey is begun, a journey is ended and the novel form is that of virile maturity.' This journey may be physical, psychological or spiritual—but there is movement from one point to a more distant one. The novel deals with man's consciousness, and this consciousness does not descend from the blue. It is the creation of a particular environment and time, and its birth coincided with the growth of the idea of individual freedom. The history of the novel, therefore, runs parallel to the history of individualism. It was bourgeois ideology that first assured the individual of personal liberty. It follows from these premises that, at least in Bengali literature—certain memorable craftsmen notwithstanding—the development of the novel took place only after the British had conquered India.

A Historical Perspective of the Bengali Novel

There were certain significant changes in the society and life-style of Bengal after the advent of the British rulers. These changes were compounded with the decline of the village community and the birth of urban centres; Charnock starting his trade in Calcutta from 1690. The influence of these phenomena was far-reaching. Originally, literature was oral, expressing a group experience, not an individual one. The Vaishnava songs and the *maṅgalkāvya* were sung at gatherings to which everyone came to listen. But when Charles Wilkins and Panchanan Karmakar (end of 18th century) introduced the printing press and movable types into the country the whole character of literature changed. It became written literature. Now it was necessary to know the alphabet and use one's eyes to read. Literature changed from a group experience to a personal one. It was now the preserve of the literate and the educated. Literacy and education entailed schooling—they required time and money. One could no longer spend the whole day working in the field, at a loom or at a potter's wheel and then enjoy literature in its full flavour in the evenings. Now, one had to know one's alphabet. This was such a fundamental change that transformed our literature. Previously, the writer knew his connoisseurs directly and personally for they were physically present in his audience whether at a feudal court or at the village temple. But now the writer had no idea as to who was going to read his works. The artist no longer knew his patrons personally. The geographical boundaries of literary circulation expanded because written literature could be

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taken to distant places, where the author himself had never been. But the number of consumers did not increase simultaneously, for only some, not all, could read. The reader was now part of a privileged class, the members of which could spend time and money on knowing their alphabet. The writer also belonged to the same class because he too had taken trouble over learning his letters. The distinction between the literate and illiterate originated from this class base.

Moreover, the class which was both creating and consuming literature had been produced by the phenomenon of urbanization. In India, class distinctions were intrinsically linked to the caste system. Right from the beginning, only the upper castes could avail of the privilege of educational facilities. Most Bengali novelists, it will be seen, were upper caste Hindus. All family names should be noted carefully for these indicate the caste of the writers.

In the early part of the 19th century school and college facilities were available only in the newly established cities, mainly in Calcutta. Moreover, the British had a definite motive behind their educational programme in India. Education was to benefit a few, not all. This educated minority would take on clerical and administrative tasks, thus reducing the expenditure of importing civilians from Britain. Caste Hindus were the first to jump at this educational opportunity. The Muslim population did not collaborate at first because the British had, after all, usurped their kingdom. When they did want a share of the cake it was too late, for the caste Hindus had already grabbed everything. This is the reason for the paucity of Muslim novelists in Bengal in spite of the sizeable Muslim population. All these facts have to be kept in mind before a historical perspective of the Bengali novel can be obtained.

In the West, the end of the feudal system meant that the means of production came into the hands of the bourgeoisie. In Bengal, however, the colonial situation acted in concert with the caste situation to create a different state of affairs. The means of production in India were not owned by the Indian middle class but by the British imperialists. Therefore, the Bengali middle class took on a comprador or lumpen character.

This Bengali bourgeoisie had also an ability to shut their eyes to reality. One significant example of this trait is that practically nowhere in the pre-Independence Bengali novel is there any indication of the kind of 'apartheid' which was then prevalent in Calcutta. One part of Calcutta under the Raj was marked 'whites only' and it was generally forbidden for all Indians, except servants, to enter the residential quarters of their British masters.

Another notable point is that authors could not live on their royalties. (Even now, all Bengali novels—except the bestsellers—run to editions of only 1100 copies.) They had to hold down a job or pursue a profession. Many of these jobs were in government services. So it was impossible for a writer to criticize or protest against this foreign government. These facts should help to solve the enigma of the Bengali novel.

The Beginning: Bankim Chandra

The first novel in Bengali, *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* (The Spoilt Child, 1856), was written by Tekchand Thakur (pen-name of Pyāricānd Mitra, 1814–83). This was a realistic portrayal of a spoilt child but it had loud moral overtones. Sections of this novel, however, are extraordinarily vivid and fresh. It was here, perhaps for the first time, that the middle-class Bengali looked critically at himself. Maybe there was even a latent warning in it regarding the mode of development of a certain section of the Bengali bourgeoisie. This section consisted of the *nouveau riche* who indulged their children to the latter's total detriment. Tekchand Thakur is hinting at the double standards and self-interest of these people.

In 1865, a novel called *Durgeśnandini* was published. The author was a Hindu Brahmin and a Deputy Collector for the Government of British India, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (Beng. Chattopadhaya, 1838–94). Some critics call him the first Bengali novelist. He obtained his B. A. degree in 1858 from the newly founded Calcutta University, and entered government service as a Deputy Collector. Since writing in English was at that time a craze among the literate Bengali, Bankim Candra followed this tradition in his first novel *Rājmohun's Wife* (1864). As a very complicated story in which the plot thickens rapidly and threads tangle together, it dwells on the breakdown of the relationship between a husband and wife, and the psychological strain behind it. Bankim later tried to do it over again in Bengali, but left it unfinished only to be completed after his death by a nephew Sachischandra. His next novel *Durgeśnandini* was written in Bengali. Before this the best prose story available in Bengali was Iswarchandra Vidyasagar's *Sītār Vanavās* which retells a Sanskrit play. Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* had also been retold by Vidyasagar in the form of a prose narrative. *Durgeśnandini* owed its phenomenal popularity to the fact that there were no good prose narratives written before it. A modern reader will find too many flaws in it to call it a good novel, but it had a great impact on contemporary readers. Tagore in one of his essays likens the publication of *Durgeśnandini* to the breaking of dawn after a pitch-black night.

To understand the development of the Indian novel it is essential to have a close acquaintance with Bankim Chandra. This is especially necessary because of his popularity all over India. Literary works are the products of their class, society and time. The restlessness, doubts and paradoxes of Bankim's time were depicted with great intensity in his work. Bankim Chandra regretted in many of his writings that Bengal had no history and raised the slogan that such a

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history was necessary. But he himself was no researcher of facts, nor did he have an authentic historical sense. Consequently, he concocted history and many of his novels were products of a strange mixture of nostalgia and despair.

Bankim Chandra was a Hindu revivalist having close contact with the western ideas of the 19th century. This element of revivalism also made him the first Indian nationalist who wanted the restoration of Hindu rule in India. The song 'Bande Mātaram' (Worship the Mother) is from the text of his novel *Ānandamaṭh* (1882). But with all his patriotism his support and admiration for the British were evident in all the novels in which he used patriotism as a theme, as for example in *Ānandamaṭh*, *Devī Caudhurāṇī* (1884) and *Candraśekhar* (1875). In *Ānandamaṭh* itself side by side with the 'Bande Mātaram' song—he expressed the hope that peace and order would now reign in India since the British rule had been established. Obviously, therefore, there is no point in revolt.

Bankim Chandra wrote fourteen novels in Bengali if we exclude *Muchirām Guḍer Jīvancarit* (The Career of Muchiram Gud, 1884), *Kamalākānter Daptar* (1875) and *Kṛṣṇacaritra* (1886) which were written as experiments in prose narrative technique. Among these, as many as eight novels deal with historical incidents and characters, but none of them can really be called a historical novel. Bankim Chandra has himself stated: 'A novel is a novel, not a history'. In his last novel, *Sītārām* (1887), he says, with reference to certain historical incidents in it: 'These are historical matters, consequently of little importance to us, and we shall not spend our time in describing them in detail. A novelist should concern himself, *with inner matters, not with history*' (italics mine). Some people may call this statement a contradiction in terms. Why did Bankim Chandra use historical backgrounds, persons and events for most of his novels if historical matters are not the concern of the novelist? However, it is true that history plays an unreal role in most of his novels. In the novel, *Rājsiṁha* (1882, substantially revised, 1893), emperor Aurangzeb goes to war because he hears a rumour that some young girl has kicked his portrait to pieces. If Bankim Chandra really believed that Aurangzeb had waged war because of such trifling reasons, his historical sense must have been dubious to say the least. He also did not concern himself with the political, social and economic conflicts that actually controlled the flow of history. It has been said that he was influenced by Scott, but he does not seem to have that sharp historical sense that infused all of Scott's novels. As a matter of fact, his novels do not even contain any accurate descriptions of the manners and customs of the past. They are, thus, useless as documents.

The contradictions inherent in Bankim Chandra are also obvious in his depiction of male/female relationships. All his novels show a definitely male chauvinist attitude though some of his early novels contain a few defiant heroines. *Durgeśnandini* (The Castellan's Daughter, 1865), for example, has a rather incredible incident where a Muslim woman appears unveiled before a Hindu prince. Accepting, for the moment, this impossible happening, Ayeṣā's statement in that novel: 'This prisoner is the lord of my heart', sounds very much like rebellion, coming as it does from a woman. But, in his later novels, women who try to control their destinies or defy society, inevitably come to a bad end: Kundanandini in *Viṣavṛkṣa* (Poison Tree, 1873), Saibalini in *Candraśekhar* (1875) and Rohini in *Kṛṣṇakānter Will* (Krishnakanta's Will, 1878). His model woman appears in *Devī Caudhurāṇī*, and she is totally dependent on her husband. Prafulla, as she is called, is a much more attractive character than her husband Vrajesvar. She is inventive, hardworking and capable of leading others. Yet at the end of the novel she abandons the outer world, and enters the family life along with her husband's other existing wives. Therein lies, according to Bankim Chandra, the fulfilment of womanhood. In this novel Bankim Chandra reaches the climax of feudal Hindu morality. Maybe this is why his novels so often seem unreal to us and full of absurdities. Even today Hindu society hesitates to rehabilitate kidnapped women or runaway wives. Yet, in *Viṣavṛkṣa* Suryamukhi returns to her husband without causing a ripple of gossip in the village community. Indira is abducted by robbers before being reunited with her husband, but the gossip-loving censorious Hindu society does not throw up its hands in horror. Even the robber queen, Prafulla, is admitted to her husband's harem without any murmurs from the village people.

The ordinary man is practically absent in Bankim Chandra's novels. Even when he tries to depict contemporary life, he only describes the affluent middle class of which he himself was such an excellent representative. He does not seem to know of the existence of farmers and labourers—unless they are domestic helps. Even when he depicts such characters, he inevitably turns them into comic and clumsy caricatures: comic 'Vidyadiggaj' in *Durgeśnandini* is a comparatively ordinary person or the two farmers in *Sītārām* (1887) who are unconcerned about the war in their own country because they maintain that a change of rulers would make no difference to them. This is in spite of the fact that the anarchy and looting which accompany war will affect them most.

The descriptions of his heroines are rather artificial and remind one of the rhetorical passages in Sanskrit literature. Consequently, all the women seem like dead dolls. This is perhaps appropriate in view of their doll-like behaviour throughout the novels. Bankim manipulated his characters in such a way that they have little scope of independence. Either chance or Bankim Chandra—controls everything. His novels—especially the 'historical' ones—abound in melodramatic incidents. Intrigues, the scaling of walls, sudden nocturnal invasions, unexpected revelations and beautiful

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women brandishing daggers are usual. He allows his heroes and heroines to accomplish fantastic feats—even the branding of a former lover with hot iron.

The formulae of Bankim Chandra's novels appear simple today. They consist of a mishmash of the points mentioned above, along with chaste love, gushing sentiment, dyed-in-the-wool villains, swooning maidens, overt proselytizing, religion and sex. The virgins are seduced by handsome princes and the hero's lackey often ends up having an affair with the heroine's maid (as in *Rājsiṁha*). Permutations and combinations of these characteristics continue to provide to this day popular fare for the general public through the medium of Hindi films. In this context, Bankim Chandra's influence is unique. His writings catered superbly to popular taste and to the new bourgeois values, creating a demand for the novel.

Bankim Chandra, however, did not contribute much to the narrative technique. He concentrated more on developing Bengali prose. If he had been an *avant-garde* writer, he would perhaps have conceived *Muchirām Guḍer Jīvancarit*, *Kamalākānter Daptar* and *Kṛṣṇacaritra* as experimental novels and not as serious or satirical essays as they are. His language—even in dialogue—was quite alien to the language of ordinary men. Consequently, his novels moved one step away from realistic depictions of society. Yet, Tekchand Thakur before him had boldly tried to use the colloquial language in *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl*. From this point of view, Kaliprasanna Simha's *Hutom Pyaṅcār Naksā* (Sketches by a Big Owl, 1862) also was memorable, though it was not quite a novel. Unfortunately, Bankim Chandra became so commercially successful that his prose style continued to dominate Bengali literature for a long time after him. Even Tagore used the Bankim style almost till 1911 before he tried to break away into a sophisticated colloquial style in *Ghare Bāire* (The Home and the World, 1916). Even then he was only partially successful because his colloquial language was rather stilted and self-conscious when it was not rhetorical or flamboyant, and so totally unlike the speech of ordinary men. The Bengali novel had to wait till the end of the First World War—for the advent of the three Banerjis (Beng. Bandyopādhyāys)—to witness a real change in its language.

Besides writing 14 novels himself, Bankim Chandra also inspired his friends and brothers to write. His elder brother Sanjiv Chandra (1834–89) is still remembered for the two connected novels *Mādhavilatā* (1880) and *Kanṭhamālā* (1877). He too was influenced by Bankim Chandra in the arrangement of situations in his novels, but his work is comparatively quiet and unassuming.

Rameschandra and the Historical Novels

As a historical novelist Rameschandra Datta (Rameścandra Datta, 1848–1909) is more memorable. He too was encouraged to write by Bankim and he produced four novels set against the perspective of an exciting century of Indian history: *Baṅgavijetā* (The Conqueror of Bengal, 1874), *Mādhavikankan* (The Bracelet of Madhabi Flowers, 1877), *Rājput Jīvansandhyā* (The Sunset of the Rajput Life, 1879) and *Mahārāṣtra Jīvanprabhāt* (Dawn in the Life of Maharastra, 1878). The first two romances have historical backgrounds as in Bankim, but the other two are still interesting for other reasons. One tells the story of the waning of Rajput strength while the other of the waxing of Mahratta power under Sivaji. These novels are valuable, at least as period pieces, because Rameschandra takes great care in recording the manners and customs of the time and draws from his vast fund of authentic historical knowledge. His first two books may be sentimental imitations of Bankim Chandra but his last two are lucid and worthwhile creations. He had an alert and lively mind that was not prone to exaggeration. His most interesting works, however, are *Samsār* (Family, 1881) and *Samāj* (Society, 1894)—which vividly portray village life in a gentle and cultivated manner. Rameschandra was actually a historian, economist and administrator but, as a creative artist, his impact was less felt in subsequent Bengali literature.

Damodar Mukherjee (Beng. Dāmodar Mukhopādhyāy, 1854–1906), a relation of Bankim by marriage, wrote sequels to the first two novels by Bankim Chandra in *Tilottamā*, *Nabābnandini* (The Daughter of a Nawab) and *Mṛṇmoyī* (1874). These novels revel in melodrama and romance with fate playing the lead role. Probably, the only realist in Bankim's age was Taraknath Ganguly (Beng. Tāraknāth Gangopādhyāy, 1843–91). His best published novel is *Svarṇalatā* (The Golden Creeper, 1873) which is an intimate picture of the joys and sorrows of a Bengali middle class family. *Ālāler Gharer Dulāl* seems a trifle sketchy and unstructured when compared to *Svarṇalatā*.

Trailokyanath: Magic Realism

Trailokyanath Mukherji's (Beng. Trailokyanāth Mukhopādhyāy, 1847–1919) long story 'Lullu' in the collection *Bhūt O Mānuṣ* (Ghosts and Men, 1896) is a strange and delightful blend of social satire and fantasy. Accenting the second syllable of each word a character says in this story: 'I scrub myself with soap, pumice, sand and a hundred other things each day. Tell me, brother, have I become a sāhib (an English man) yet?' We are immediately reminded of the other sāhib in Dinabandhu Mitra's play *Nīldarpaṇ* (1860), who was so successful in fathering 'black bastards' with white masks to fill the Indian cultural scene. Trailokyanath had a unique sense of humour and he introduced a kind of glorious nonsense into Bengali narrative prose. Along with *Kaṅkābatī* (1892), his *Damarucarit* (The Career of Damaru, 1923) ranks unequalled in Bengali prose. No one has yet written anything like it and Trailokyanath's place in Bengali literature is assured on account of these two works.

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Trailokyanath is an unusual writer because his imagination is so radically different from other Bengali novelists. His humour, satire and the sense of the absurd make him unique. Though he imitates Hugo in *Bāngāl Nidhirām* (1890) and though his work recalls Rabelais in some places, his point of view is always peculiarly his own. His tales within tales often remind one of *The Arabian Nights*. The use of the marvellous, the coexistence of ghosts and men, the adventures of living men in the world of the dead, the utilization of folk-and fairy-tale motifs in creating a 'magic realism' are interesting traits.

Thus, from an integrated point of view, the early Bengali novels mingled western and Indian ingredients, very often badly. The perceptions and feelings were traditional and the process of creation lacked inventiveness. Both the reader and writer belonged to the new middle class and they saw the novel as an escape route, keeping their eyes shut to the real colonial situation.

Western Impact

The West was then identical for us with Great Britain. The best French and Russian novels had not reached India, nor truly had Austen, Scott or Dickens, though three quarters of Dickens's work had been published before Bankim Chandra wrote his first novel. France on the other hand had already produced Balzac, Stendhal and Flaubert. All of Dostoevsky's works had been written before Bankim Chandra produced his last book. Damodar Mukhopadhyay had translated instead, Wilkie Collins's gothic thriller into Bengali and even Trailokyanath made adaptations not from Blazac or Stendhal, but from Hugo's sentimental novel. Bengali versions of W. M. Reynold's *Mysteries of London* enjoyed in the 19th century great popularity along with many Bengali editions of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. These facts when taken together would indicate that the Bengali novel was full of anomalies and incongruities even though it conquered the neoliterates of those times. But whatever was borrowed from the British remained British. East remained East and West, West. The literary market, however, imitates the business market in this that there is always a great demand for cheap western commodities. A modern reader will be intrigued to note that Bankim Chandra's *Rajanī* (1877) reflects some influence of Bulwer Lytton's novel *The Last Days of Pompeii*. Though the multiple '*ich*' form is used here for the first time in the Bengali novel, there is no difference in perspective. The novel combines sentimentality with conventional morality and abounds in improbable and incredible events. Bankim Chandra chose to imitate Lytton, when Laurence Sterne, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens were available as models.

The Importance of Rabindranath

It was on this stage that Rabindranath Tagore (Beng. Rabindranāth Ṭhākur, 1861–1941) made his debut. He was four when Bankim Chandra's first Bengali novel was published in 1865. In his childhood, he read Bankim avidly and admired him a great deal. He even wrote an eulogistic obituary on Bankim's death. In his reminiscences and criticism he places Bankim Chandra in a very high position, and considers *Rājsiṁha* a fine novel.

Rabindranath's own literary career spans more than 60 years. His first novel *Karuṇā* remained unfinished, but *Rājarṣī* (The Saint-King, 1887) his second, for all its faults, marked a great advance from Bankim Chandra. This was in spite of the fact that *Rājarṣī* was written from the same historical perspective as most of Bankim Chandra's novels. *Bauṭhākurāṇīr Hāṭ* (The Village Market of the Lady, 1883), another historical novel on the same model, suggests however, that Rabindranath's admiration for the former was a trifle ambivalent. There are parodies of Bankim Chandra in some of Rabindranath's short stories. Speaking of his *Cokher Bāli* (The Eyesore, tr. in English as *Vinodini*, 1903) he refers obliquely to Bankim's *Viṣavṛkṣa*: 'the devil still cultivates poison trees in the soil of stories. . . .(now) this happens in the workshop of the mind'. Emphasis on the mind explains the number of introverts in Rabindranath's novels—he had to depend on the grain of character rather than on incidents. In his narratives, interpretations usually takes precedence over representation. This trait is apparent from the beginning, and even in the novels which have historical backgrounds and characters the emphasis is more on the mind and character than on the plot. The mind very often tries to control happenings. From this perspective, Bankim Chandra's characters seem one-dimensional in contrast even though he went on record saying that 'the revelation of the inner world' was the real responsibility of the novelist.

A faithful portrayal of the upper section of the Bengali bourgeoisie may be obtained from Rabindranath's novels. His inventiveness—especially in his novels, if not in his short stories—did not lie in the arrangement of incidents. Early Bengali novelists experienced certain difficulties in depicting relationships between mature men and women. It was almost impossible for unrelated adults of the opposite sexes to meet in Bengali society because of the purdah system and the custom of the arranged marriage. In Bankim's *Rādhārāṇī* (1875) the hero in his mid-thirties meets the heroine first when she is only eleven. Consequently, they have to wait for a number of years before they can consummate their love. Bankim Chandra builds the whole novel around separation and reunion. This situation—where the adult hero has to wait for his child heroine to gain maturity—repeats itself in novel after novel, and this also explains the predominance in Bengali novels of widowed, though often virgin and usually childless, heroines. In Rabindranath's *Caturaṅga* (Four Parts, 1916) there is a hint that the heroine's marriage was not consummated

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at all, even till the death of her husband, or probably till her own death. Her husband leaves all his property—including his wife—to his spiritual guru. In all these novels, the woman's desires are shown to be totally unimportant. In a man-dominated society, a woman's fulfilment lies in the complete obedience to her husband, lord and master. Bankim did not approve even of young widows falling in love. Widowed or otherwise, men could have other sets of values.

Echoes of these sentiments can sometimes be heard in early Rabindranath. He claimed that his first important novel *Cokher Bāli* was a take-off from Bankim Chandra's *Viṣavṛkṣa*. But after his heroine, Vinodini, has caused all the emotional upheaval, he persuades himself to shave her head clean and send her off to eat vegetarian fare at holy Varanasi. He even suggests that her 'eros' would also be as easily sloughed off as her hair. This kind of conclusion indicates the difficulties caused by the complex social situation existing in Bengal even a few decades back. Only widows could then meet men not related to them—yet these widows could not remarry. But if love and erotic sensibility are left out, novels become dull. Arranging meetings for unrelated, though adult men and women were unacceptable, incredible and shocking. Rabindranath's novel *Naukāḍubi* (1906; the English translation, *The Wreck*, appeared in 1926) tried a stratagem. Two newly-wedded couples are separately returning home in sailboats right after the ceremonies are over. One groom had not yet looked at his wife's face because he had married her against his will, only to fulfil his father's wishes. (Perhaps this father was a state of mind.) The bride of the other couple had not seen the face of her husband out of naive bashfulness (also perhaps a state of mind). A storm capsizes both the boats and one bride is washed up on the shore along with the groom who is not her husband. The members of the family of this groom who had of course seen the face of the girl before die, all very conveniently for the author. Chance then plays havoc with these two unsuspecting victims who thought (naturally) that they were actually married to each other.

Chance continues to play its part in Rabindranath's later novels. By the time *Seṣer Kavitā* (Parting Poem, but known in the English version as *Farewell, My Friend*, 1929) was written, women in Bengal had begun to work and to step out in society. The heroine of this novel is a governess in a wealthy family while the hero comes from a rich westernized home. The two, therefore, move in different circles. Only an accident involving two cars on the hilly road in Shillong can make the two meet. The collision is not, of course, very serious and only puts one car out of order so that the hero may have a chance of driving the heroine to her destination. This lack of inventiveness in the construction of incidents is apparent in most of Rabindranath's work. *Gorā* (1910), which has been called Rabindranath's best novel, also starts with a ubiquitous accident which causes the meeting between Vinay, Gora, Sucharita and Lalita.

Rabindranath's forte is not, therefore, plot structure—what he calls the 'soil' of the story—but characterization. However, he has made some interesting studies of western influences on Bengali life in *Cokher Bāli*, *Gorā*, *Caturaṅga* and *Ghare Bāire*. Vimala in *Ghare Bāire* (1916) was married very young and Nikhilesh, her husband, practically brought her up, with the help of a British governess. This, by itself, could have been the study of a complex human relationship. An additional conflict between nationalism and liberal humanism has been pushed into the scene. Nationalism has been regarded here as narrow and unacceptable if it chose to end colonial rule through violent means. *Cār Adhyāy* also has the same message. Many questions about *Ghare Bāire* and *Cār Adhyāy* are resolved if looked at in the light of the colonial syndrome.

Certain themes repeat themselves in Rabindranath's novels. One such theme is that of the two sisters. In *Mālañca* (The Garden, 1934), the husband waits anxiously for his ill wife to die, and simultaneously has an affair with a healthy and beautiful girl. Ironically, the husband's wealth is derived from the flower garden his wife worked so hard at building up. This is, perhaps, the most cruel and cold-blooded novel that Rabindranath ever wrote. A variation of this theme occurs in *Dui Bon* (Two Sisters, 1933), where the husband tends to divide women into two categories: mothers and lovers. He can then conveniently relegate his wife to the mother category and enjoy an affair with his sister-in-law.

In the metaphysical sense, love in separation always takes precedence over love in union; one is like water drawn from wells to be stored at home in pitchers, the other like the tumultous expanse of waters that liberates. *Seṣer Kavitā* ends on this note. One wonders whether Rabindranath took his theories seriously or whether he was ironically depicting the self-deception of the Bengali bourgeoisie by these means. The short *Caturaṅga* is perhaps the best of his novels. Here, the theme is the clash between utilitarianism and metaphysical anguish as ideals of life, between Hindu revivalism in the Bengali middle class and imported ideas of liberal humanism. This novel uses the subjective '*ich*' form with rhetorical intrusions. Srivilas, apparently a minor character, is both narrator and interpreter. There are certain minor technical flaws in the construction—Srivilas is sometimes found eavesdropping or reading other people's diaries—but the book maintains a subliminal lure of a tense and wholly serious quest under the surface of irony. This is a minor masterpiece on account of its theme and technical finesse.

Sentimental Realism: Sarat Chandra

However, neither Bankim nor Rabindranath was so popu-

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lar a novelist as was Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, (Beng. Śaratcandra Chaṭṭopādhyāy, 1876–1938). With a lower middle class background and no proper education, he spent his early childhood in Bihar and his youth in Rangoon. His popularity was assured with his first publication in 1903. *Baḍididi* (Elder Sister), his first novel, was published in 1913, by which time Rabindranath's *Gorā* was already before the readers. Later he also wrote on political themes. *Pather Dābi* (Bid for the Pathway, 1926) was of this kind and was at once proscribed by the British Government. The novel is more in the nature of a sentimental thriller, in which the author introduced a character who could perform all the incredible things and who possessed knowledge on a vast variety of subjects. But Sarat Chandra is outstanding not for books like *Pather Dābi*. His reputation came from the simplicity and sentimentality of his writings which contain vivid descriptions of the lower middle class and the poorer sections of society. He is enormously sensitive to the plight of Bengali Hindu women of the middle class and depicts their pitiful position in society with great sympathy and compassion. But he too had his pet male chauvinist fantasies. His prostitutes are always victims of circumstances and actually chaste at heart. They long for home-making and child-rearing more than for anything else. In fact, the women in his novels who declare their love independently or have unashamed passion, come inevitably to sad ends. Kironmayee in *Caritrahīn* (The Wanton, 1917) is an example. A man, however, is allowed every excess by Sarat Chandra. Eternal motherhood (the Yaśodā-Krishna motif) is one of his important themes. With motherly tenderness his heroines supervise the meals and look after the well-being of childlike, naive heroes. Even his fallen women reveal self-sacrificing nobility. Though Sarat Chandra considered Rabindranath his literary master, philosophical intrusions are less evident in the younger author. On the other hand, Rabindranath's heroines never look upon the digestive organ as another name for the heart.

Sarat Chandra was writing in praise of the joint family system when it was already breaking up owing to the strains and conflicts of urban society. Examples of this naive fight against middle class selfishness and alienation are *Niṣkṛti* (Release, 1917) and *Bindur Chele* (Bindu's Ward, 1914). From the social and feminist point of view, *Arakṣaṇīyā* (Past Nubility, 1916) and *Bāmuner Meye* (A Brahmin's Daughter, 1920) are more interesting and important, both dealing, with great compassion, with the problems of women and of caste in Hindu society.

Sarat Chandra's best novel is *Śrīkānta* (1917–33, in four parts) which was originally called the Travel Accounts of Srikanta. This was an experiment with the form, written in the subjective 'ich' mode. The narration, however, is sprawling and the plot structure loose. With numerous incidents and characters the volumes range over an immense time and space. It shows all the best characteristics of Sarat Chandra, and proved to be of great influence on his contemporaries. It had, at least, one direct descendant, also in four parts, called *Mahāsthabir Jātak* (1944–65). As a purely literary work, this is even better than *Śrīkānta* and offers a memorable picture album of India at the turn of the century. The author is Premankur Atarthi (1890–1964) who under the pseudonym of 'Mahāsthabir' wrote this book. Atarthi was also a film director and directed one of the first Bengali sound films, *Denā Pāonā* (Debit and Credit) which was based on Sarat Chandra's novel of that name. Neither male dominance nor paternal tyranny form part of his attitude to women.

Period of Transition: The Kallol Period

From the mid-twenties of the 20th century, there was a revolt against middle-class values. One reason for this revolt was that it was no longer possible for the average bourgeois Bengali to find refuge or satisfaction in the aestheticism of Tagore, or in the sentimental realism (if such refuge or satisfaction were ever possible) of Sarat Chandra. A sense of change and of restlessness was sweeping the entire country, bringing with it disruption of traditional life patterns. Many disturbing social phenomena could not be overlooked anymore. The joint family system was breaking down in the cities, while the village communities were disintegrating and large-scale capital-intensive industry was emerging as a force. Added to these factors were the activist impatience with colonialism, Gandhi's civil disobedience formula and non-cooperation, the emergence of a leader like Dr. Ambedkar among the untouchables and the incorporation of the latter into the freedom struggle through Gandhi's campaign for the 'harijan'. Times were changing perceptibly and the values and art of one's predecessors no longer seemed adequate. The writers of this period of transition came to believe that literature could deal with anything so long as the treatment was lifelike. But they also narrowed the focus of the novel by dealing only with the individual. This group proposed to introduce a stark realism into literature by exploring the relationship between the individual and the society. Accompanying this attitude came a sudden spate of translations and adaptations from European languages. Quite a few works of Romain Rolland (*Jean Christophe*), Knut Hamsun (*Hunger*, *Pan*, *Vagabonds*, *The Growth of the Soil*), Johann Bojar (*The Great Hunger*) and others were translated. A novel called *Śeli* by Nripendrakrishna Chatterjee (Beng. Nṛpendra kṛṣṇa Chattopādhyāy, 1906–63) was based on *Ariel*, a fictional biography of Shelley by Andre Maurois. These foreign authors appeared to echo the cravings of the new Bengali mind better than Rabindranath any longer could. Translations and adaptations from them were not results of coincidences or accidents but dictated by a sense of affinities. Achintya Kumar Sengupta (1903–76) and Prabodhkumar

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Sanyal (b. 1907) found their own thoughts reflected in these novels. Sarat Chandra's *Śrīkānta* added to the cumulative effect—the representation of the individual as restless, exiled, wandering. Achintyakumar wrote *Bede* (The Nomad, 1929) on this theme, and Gokulchandra Nag (1895–1925) his *Pathik* (The Wayfarer, 1925), while Prabodhkumar produced a whole battalion of undirected and confused drifters in his books. These writers, unaware of the reasons for their own alienation from society, turned to the Hamsun kind of mysticism for an answer. This dangerous type of mysticism later came to support fascism in Europe. Premendra Mitra's (b. 1904) *Paṅk* (Slush, 1927) may be considered a case in point. Set in the late twenties, this novel shows a first-class graduate from Cambridge pulling rickshaws for a living. Even though unemployment had reached startling proportions at that time in India, the spectacle of a Cambridge graduate in this plight is hardly credible. This kind of writing did not add much to the attempt at portraying realism by the Kallol group of writers. The published correspondence between Achintyakumar and Premendra Mitra brings out the fact that both desired to write like Hamsun and Gorky at the same time. 'How do they propose to blend Hamsun and Gorky?'—wondered such committed writers as Manik Banerjee (1908–56). Evidently most of the writers of the Kallol age were divorced from reality. (Achintyakumar, the historian and theoretician of this age came to write biographies of the mystics half-way through his career.) Most of their 'problems' and psychological hang-ups were actually directly imported from the bargain basements of cheap western novels. Though somewhat older in years, writers like Nareshchandra Sengupta (1882–1964) and Jagadishchandra Gupta (1886–1957) had much more to offer than the Kallol writers.

Nareshchandra took his readers into a boneman's alley to show the offshoots of a murder in *Khuner Jer* (The Outcome of Murder) or to show the plight of a Muslim woman in a frustrating peasant society in *Ruper Abhiśāp* (The Curse of Beauty). But his works are much more significant than the imitations of petty European novels produced by the writers of the Kallol age. Jagadishchandra showed interest in the complexities of human relationships in his *Asādhu Siddhārtha* (Unprincipled Siddhartha, 1929), *Niṣedher Paṭabhūmikāy* (Against the Background of Negation, 1952) and *Laghuguru* (Light and Weighty, 1931). The materials of these works are composed of doubt and disbelief. On the other hand, the attempts by the Kallol group of writers to put what is called 'slices of life' into their novels was doomed from the start because their 'slices' did not belong to ordinary middle class Bengali life. Meanwhile the industrial worker also demanded notice, and Sailajananda Mukhopadhyay (1900–76), a friend of Nazrul Islam the rebel poet, wrote fine stories with coal miners in them. His work was not perhaps as organic as Zola's *Germinal*, but it was observant and the product of a conscious mind. Another early victim of the Bengali film world, Sailajananda never quite fulfilled his promise.

The Portrait of the Artist. The writers of the mid-twenties knew of the existence of slums, labourers and crime, but they did not quite work these topics into their novels. Buddhadeva Bose (1908–74) had a sensitive, subtle and sophisticated mind, steeped in romantic values, as can be seen in any of his novels. Since he was primarily a poet, his novels are crowded with introverted and alienated characters. *Lāl Megh* (Scarlet Clouds, 1932) was a notable attempt at introducing the stream-of-consciousness method and the interior monologue into Bengali literature, as was the case in Dhurjatiprasad Mukhopadhyay's (1894–1961) trilogy *Antaḥśilā* (The Undercurrent, 1935), *Ābarta* (The Whirlpool, 1937) and *Mohānā* (The Mouth of the River, 1943). Buddhadeva's work showed much technical virtuosity and linguistic versatality. *Parikramā* (A Survey, 1938) for instance is the story of a single day, as is Gopal Haldar's (b. 1904) *Ekadā* (Once Upon a Time, 1939) which is the first part of a trilogy. Most of Buddhadeva's heroes are self conscious artists and, consequently, great emphasis is placed on the world of their mind. The relationship or clash between the individual and the world, the inert and the conscious, between heaven and hell constitute his main preoccupation. No writer of the Kallol age probably devoted so much time and thought to themes such as the role of the artist in life. His meticulous care about his craft makes him a writer's writer.

Commitments and the Novel. Annadasankar Ray (b. 1904) also experimented mainly with the technical aspects of creativity. He used the methods of folk- or fairy-tales as well as the old Indian narrative style. Sometimes he consciously adopted structures used specifically by other writers, as in *Kanya* (Daughter, 1953) and *Sukh* (Happiness). He also used Vaishnava mysticism and Gandhian philosophy, as also politics and ideology as elements in his creative work. The list of Bengali novelists with political ideologies include Tarasankar Banerji (Beng. Tārāśaṅkar Bandyopādhyāy, 1898–1971)—one of the most important novelists of the period between the wars—and Satinath Bhadudi (1906–65) who wrote *Jāgarī* (On the Wake, 1946). Bhadudi's most important experimental work, however, was the two-volume *Dhorāicaritmānas* (A Vision of the Career of Dhorai, 1949–51) where he consciously used the old Indian narrative style in the form of Tulsidas' *Rāmcaritamānas*. Narayan Gangopadhyay (originally Tāraknāth Gangopādhyāy, 1918–70); Savitri Ray who wrote about the communist movement in *Svaralipi* (Musical Notations, 1952), *Mālaśrī* (a ragini) and *Pākādhāner gān* (Son of the Ripened Rice); Ashim Ray, and Gopal Haldar who wrote trilogies: *Tridiba* (Three Days), consisting of *Ekadā* (One Day), *Anyadin* (Another Day) and *Arekdin* (Still Another Day) and another trilogy which

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comprised *Uñapañcāśī* (About 1350 B.C.) and *Pañcāśer Path* (On the Way to 1350 B.C.) also had political commitments expressed in their novels.

Regional Novelists. Three Banerjis, however, stand as the most distinguished writers in the history of the Bengali novel. They are Tarasankar Banerji, Bibhutibhusan Banerji (1894–1950) and Manik Banerji. Bibhutibhusan and Manik began to publish, not in *Kallol* as was possible, but in another magazine called *Vicitra*. All three of them wrote about specific regions of Bengal and were regional in the sense that vivid descriptions of their chosen region appear in their works. Rivers and monsoons play very important roles in the life of Bengal and their influence can be felt even in medieval literature. All the three Banerjis have used the river theme in at least one novel each: Manik wrote *Padmānadīr Mājhi* (The Boatmen of Padma) in 1936; Tarasankar his *Kālindi* in 1940 and *Hāṁsulibāṁker Upakathā* in 1947, and Bibhutibhusan his *Ichāmati* in 1950. Novels of this category include Sarojkumar Ray Chaudhuri's (1903–72) *Mayurākṣi* (1936) and *Kapotākṣa* (1938), Rameścandra Sen's (1894–1962) *Kurpālā* (1946), Advaita Mallabaraman's *Titās Ekti Nadīr Nām* (Titas is the Name of a River), Subodh Bosu's (b. 1908) *Padmāpramattā Nadī* (Padma—a Turbulent River, 1939), Pramathanath Bisi's (b. 1901) *Padmā* (1935) and Samaresh Bose's *Gangā*.

Tarasankar's literary career was the longest among the three Banerjis. His best novels unveil the life of the people of Birbhum, a south-western district of Bengal and he depicts their economic, political and social condition very accurately. He readily draws from folk traditions in his experiments with the novel as in *Hāṁsulibāṁker Upakathā* (The Legend of Bend of the River Hamsuli) or *Nāginī-Kanyār Kāhin* (The Tale of a Snake-Maiden, 1952). The hero of an early novel *Kavi* (The Poet, 1941) is an illiterate folk poet. Near epic qualities can be found in the vast expanse and scope, variety of incidents, and political and social awareness of his *Gaṇadevatā*. Tribals, outcastes and marginal middle-class characters people this novel but the author's curiosity about them is kept within comfortable middle-class limits.

One explanation for the sprawling construction of most of Tarasankar's novels is that some were originally conceived as short stories. During Tarasankar's time, it was difficult for an author to find a publisher for a new novel. Magazines serialized novels written only by well-known authors. Hence, when Tarasankar later found a good market for his books, he spread out some of his stories into novels with consequent structural looseness.

Bibhutibhusan was deservedly famous for his novel *Pather Pāñcāli* (A Balad of the Road, 1929) and its sequel *Aparājita* (1932). He planned to finish this monumental piece of work with a third novel *Kājal* but died quite suddenly. No other Bengali writer has been maimed and distorted so much by film-makers and translators. Bibhutibhusan's real strength lay in his apparent artlessness. The surface simplicity of his work has often deceived many readers and writers. He thought deeply about the technique and form of the novel, as can be seen in his preface to *Āraṇyak* (In Woodlands, 1938) where he specifically requests that the reader should not consider it a travel book or diary. Perhaps no one else has been able to describe so powerfully the dreams of Bengali village life, and the way they shatter. The hopes and fears of these rural people and the innocence of their childhood have been evocatively presented in his novels. His important works include *Dṛṣṭipradīp* (1935) and *Ādarśa Hindu Hotel* (Ideal Hotel for Hindus, 1940).

Sense of History

Manik (officially Prabodhkumār) Banerji was probably the most important and significant novelist of Bengal. He combined to a fine degree awareness with detachment, analysis with observation. Fortunately, he did not possess the typical Bengali sentimentality. Creative writing for him was 'a passion, like a passion for learning mathematics, for constructing objects, for learning how to play a certain kind of game, for singing, for making money, for wanting to know the criteria for the ultimate validity of things and deeds, in short, for those to whom art has become a mode of living.' The complete control that he exercised over his craft and materials is apparent in novels like *Jananī* (Mother, 1934), *Ahiṁsā* (Non-violence, 1936), *Putulnācer Itikathā* (Puppets' Tale, 1936), *Dibārātrir Kāvya* (Poetry of Night and Day, 1936), *Padmānadīr Mājhi* (Boatman of Padma River, 1939), *Jiyanta* (That Which is Living, 1950), *Sonār Ceye Dāmi* (Dearer than Gold, 1951–52) and *Mājhir Chele* (Boatman's Son, 1956). *Cinha* (The Sign, 1949) takes as a theme the organic and close relationship between the writer, society and politics. Manik could step across middle-class boundaries and write sympathetically about farmers, fishermen and industrial workers—not as a romantic wish-fulfilment but treating them as real people. Few other Bengali novelists have been able to achieve this. In *Darpaṇ* (The Mirror, 1951), a female political worker with an aristocratic background comes to live in a slum. After using the toilet for the first time, she remembers the experience when her middle-aged teacher once tried to rape her. Manik Banerji had also a great sense of history, particularly the colonial history of this country, steeped as it is in a mixture of feudal and *petit* bourgeois systems. *Casīr Meye Kulir Bau* (A Farmer's Daughter, A Coolie's Wife) depicts, for instance, the inevitable consequences when landless peasants move to the cities as migrant labourers. In this context, one may remember Khagendranath Mitra's novel for children *Bhombol Sardār* where a village boy runs away from home to work in Tatanagar's steel plant. This novel, in four parts (1940–77), depicts the village life of Bengal with nostalgia,

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yet with a sharp sense of reality. The oppression of the landlords and the poverty of the ordinary villagers are presented clearly and without euphemism.

Manik used fishermen's dialect in his works *Padmānadīr Mājhi* and *Mājhir Chele*. *Putulnācer Itikathā* portrays how bourgeois ideology dies a slow death in the framework of feudalism. It contains no undirected existential *angst* but supplies a logical answer to a clear question. Manik's language is sharp, precise and powerful. It is capable of suggesting a barely controlled tension. The treatment of his subject is always bold, often alert and immensely energetic. He investigated the serpentine movement of the human mind.

Other writers who also used middle class life, lack of values, corruption, self-deception and the trauma of the partition of Bengal as themes were Amiyabhusan Majumdar, Narendranath Mitra (1917–75), Jyotirindra Nandi (b. 1917), Santosh Kumar Ghosh (b. 1920), Bijon Bhattacharya (b. 1906), Bimal Kar (b. 1921), Ramapada Chaudhuri (b. 1922) and Bhavani Sengupta (pseud. Cāṇakya Sen).

Adult Themes and Jivanananda. Recently, two novels from an unexpected source have stunned the Bengali readers. These are posthumously published novels written by the poet Jivanananda Das (Jīvānānanda Dās, 1899–1954). Jivanananda is considered the greatest Bengali poet of the era beginning after Rabindranath. No one knows exactly when these novels, *Mālyavān* (Dressed with a Garland, 1973) and *Sutirtha* (1977), were written, though the forties would probably be a good guess. For their mature and adult themes, unusual and sensitive handling, and linguistic sophistication they are perhaps unmatched in Bengali literature. *Mālyavān* is a claustrophobic work—a cruel but powerful representation of a marital relationship and its disintegration. *Sutirtha* is the meticulous study of an alienated anti-hero who is trying to participate actively in life. Both novels show Jivanananda's characteristic wit and the telling effect of his subtle irony. They are so different from the general run of the Bengali novels that it is perhaps understandable why Jivanananda did not allow them to be published during his lifetime. In any case, they have been largely neglected, and those who took any interest at all in them did so for a wrong reason, seeing them as a poet's neuroticism.

Notable writers of recent times include Sirsendu Mukhopadhyay, Sunil Gangopadhyay (b. 1932), Syamal Gangopadhyay, Debesh Ray, Mati Nandi and others. Among important female writers of novels in Bengali one should mention Svarna Kumari Devi (1855–1932), Anurupa Devi (1882–1958), Sita Devi (1895–?), and her sister Shanta Devi (b. 1884), Ashapurna Devi, Pratibha Bosu, Lila Majumdar, Mahasveta Devi, Kavita Simha, Navanita Dev Sen (b. 1938) among others. Most of them use the conflict between tradition and the changing values of the times as themes. They usually depict a homely life-style in a sentimental manner. No Austen has yet arrived here with her cool, detached and ironical studies of society. While considering the great Bengali novel, with relevance to the present day political scene, it may seem that Mahasveta Devi has written a series of most significant tales about the peasant struggles and tribal scars. It is after *Hājār Curāśir Mā* (The Mother of Accused Number 1084) that she underwent a great change and instead of committed but sentimental material about the Naxalbari movement, she started writing fecund, savage and irresistible novels about Mundas, Santhals and others—and the characters rear up large and rippling with life against the green pasture of nature itself. *Agnigarbha* (The Fire Within), *Nairṛte Megh* (Clouds Gather in the South-West), *Coṭṭi Muṇḍā O Tār Tīr* (Chotti Munda and His Arrows), written in the heat of anger, are not only epics of irresistible energy, but also experiments in the novel form as an extension of the epic genre.

Bengali literature, as literature anywhere, abounds also in cheap bestsellers. This type is practically a genre by itself. Their filmworthiness and demand in the book market—are the authors' sole concern, and they run to a sentimental melodramatic formula. Bimal Mitra, Sankar (official name Manisankar Mukhopadhyay) and Nimai Bhattacharya fall into this category.

The Bengali novel is a little over a century and a quarter old. If in spite of our system of education and our particular historical background—compounded of colonial, neo-colonial, feudal and bourgeois systems—novels like *Kṛṣṇakānter Will*, *Rājput Jīvansandhyā*, *Kaṁkāvati*, *Svarnalatā*, *Gorā*, *Caturaṅga*, *Śrīkānta*, *Gaṇadevatā*, *Pather Pāñcālī*, *Āraṇyak*, *Padmānadīr Mājhi*, *Putulnācer Itikathā*, *Mālyavān*, *Sutirtha*, *Dhorāicaritmānas* and *Bhombol Sardar* could have been written in Bengali, the future should not look gloomy.

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Gujarati

GULABDAS BROKER

Origins

The Indian intelligentsia of the mid-19th century were quite enamoured of the West and its ways. But the attraction was not one-sided. Some of the more enlightened English sahibs who worked in India did not lack in appreciation of the civilization and culture of India as well as of the intelligence of the people over whom they ruled and with some of whom they worked.

One such Sahib was Russell, an Educational Inspector in Gujarat. In the Education Department with him was Nandashankar Tuljashankar Mehta (Nandaśaṅkar Tuljāśaṅkar Mehtā, 1835–1905), a talented and learned Gujarati. Russell, who was fond of the romances and tales of adventure written in English, suggested that Nandashankar write something similar, based on the model provided by the historical romances of Sir Walter Scott. Nandashankar took the suggestion in earnest and, in time, produced the first novel—*Naval Katha*—in the Gujarati language.

The First Novel

Nandashankar's novel was called *Karaṇ Ghēlō* (1866). It dealt with the life and adventures as well as the ignominious fall and tragic death of the last Hindu King of Gujarat, Karan Vaghelo. That was his name—Karan Vaghelo, but Karan being a little wild and unsteady, the author called his novel *Karaṇ Ghēlō*—(Ghēlō meaning 'mad' in Gujarati).

The book is considered, by common consent, the first novel in the Gujarati language. However, in 1862, Mahipatram Roopram Neelkanth (Mahīpatrām Rūprām Nīlkaṇṭh, 1829–91) had published a long story called *Sāsu Vahuni Ladāi* (Battle between a Mother and a Daughter-in-Law). Though it has the semblance of a novel, it does not possess much literary merit and hence can hardly be counted as the first Gujarati novel. Thus *Karaṇ Ghēlō* is considered the first novel in the language. It has, in spite of certain deficiencies and drawbacks—natural in a pioneering work—stood the test of time. Even so many years after its publication, Gujarati people remember it with esteem.

The need for a change in social consciousness was the driving force behind the writing of the novel *Karaṇ Ghēlō*. Nandashankar, talking of the scope of his novel, says, 'The disappearance of one age—the rise of another—the downfall of pride—the defeat of adultery—the victory of Dharma and the destruction of sin—I wanted to find a historical period which would be adequate enough to give an idea of all these things.'

He found this in the story of Karan, who was infatuated with the wife of his minister Madhav. To win her, he sends Madhav on a mission and has the wife kidnapped. Madhav's brother Keshav is killed in the scuffle that ensues. On his return, Madhav vows revenge. He goes to the court of Allauddin Khilji, the Sultan of Delhi, and persuades him to attack Gujarat. He promises the Sultan all help. When the attack comes, Karan fights bravely, but is defeated and imprisoned. His wife is taken away to the Sultan's harem. Finally Karan dies a miserable death.

Into the framework of this story, the author has poured all his ideas about society, religion and morality. Sometimes these things help the narrative, but often they hinder the artistic flow. The novel thus becomes loose in structure and loses its appeal.

In spite of this, however, it set a trend. Not only was it the pioneering novel in Gujarati, but it also induced other writers to write historical novels. That the literature of Gujarat is rich in historical novels is mainly due to the influence of *Karaṇ Ghēlō*.

Other Early Novels

That influence is clearly seen in two novels—*Vanarāj Cāvdo* (1881) and *Sadharā Jesang* (1896), by Mahipatram Roopram Neelkanth. But both these are pale imitations. The two novels, on the other hand, that could claim some artistic merit are *Ratnalakṣmī* (1881) and *Kulīn anē Mudra* (Money and Aristocracy, 1884) written by a Parsee, Jehangir Ardeshir Taleyarkhan (Jehāṅgīr Ardēśir Tāliyārkhān, 1846–1928), and published in 1881 and 1884 respectively. Both these novels have social themes. *Andhērī Nagarīnō Gardhavasen* (The Donkey of the Disorderly City, 1881), by Hargovandas Dwarkadas Kantawala (Hargōvandās Dvārkādās Kāṇṭāvāḷā, 1844–1931) is a satirical novel which deals with the conditions of life in the 'native states' of the province.

All these books contain a new social awareness and a sense of dissatisfaction with the older and more orthodox ways of life. This is clearly the result of the cultural contact of the East with the West as well as of the liberal outlook the writers imbibed from a western type of education.

The Novel of Novels. The above-mentioned are readable novels, but the one that is a masterpiece and a milestone

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in Gujarati literature is *Sarasvatīcandra* (1887–1901) by Govardhanram Madhavram Tripathi (Govardhanrām Madhavrām Tripāṭhi, 1855–1907).

This novel was published in four volumes, the first of which came out in 1887. It was an immediate sensation. Nothing like it had been written in Gujarati prose, in the form of a story, before. It contained wisdom, truth, experience and art. It also came out at an opportune time, when the impetuous zeal of social reformists had cooled down, yielding place to more sober thinking. Movements for the uplift of India had first taken serious roots. The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and the atmosphere was vibrant with a spirit of patriotism. The author combined in himself the wisdom of both the East and the West. The earlier belief of the superiority of the West over the East in all matters, and of the rule of the Britishers being an unmixed blessing, had toned down a little and attempts were being made to put all these things in their proper perspective. Bombay University taught its new alumni—and G. M. Tripathi was one of the early ones—the best in both English as well as Sanskrit literature and opened the eyes of the newer generations to the wisdom of India's ancient people. This gave the new generation the idea of synthesizing the new and the old.

Tripathi tried to do exactly this in *Sarasvatīcandra*. This *magnum opus* contained a whole new world of thought and feeling. The writer, a learned man, created in this voluminous work a whole world bearing the stamp of his own thinking, feeling and artistry. His story was quite simple. Sarasvaticandra, son of a rich father, highly educated and of a philosophical and idealistic bent of mind, is happily betrothed to a charming girl, Kumud, who has all the attributes that a man of his type would want in a wife. But before he can marry her, he has to leave home because of the intrigue and unloving nature of his stepmother.

The whole story is about his wanderings and experiences. During these sojourns he comes in touch with highly placed administrators and their intrigues and embroilments, with women good and bad, with temptations difficult to overcome, and with dacoits, whom he fights. Eventually he meets real sadhus and sadhvis (monks and nuns) from whom he learns much. With them he spends his time in philosophical thought, conjuring up visions of an ideal place in which one should spend one's life. He calls this place Kalyāṇgrām (The Welfare Village). At the end of the novel, instead of marrying Kumud whom he had lost by running away from home, he marries her younger sister, Kusum, who is very smart and full of life and verve. The many Kumuds and Kusums that one finds in Gujarat owe their names to these two characters in this novel.

In weaving this story of over 2,000 printed pages, Govardhanram achieved what no novelist after him has achieved in such great degree—the creation of life in all its myriad aspects. Politics and philosophy abound in it. Love is described in all its various aspects, and men and women at their best and their worst are seen with a sharp eye. As the author himself has said: 'In the guise of a story of love, I have given a story of culture.' An astute critic, A. B. Dhruva, has called *Sarasvatīcandra* a 'philosophical vagabond'.

For years after this novel was published, readers did not take any other novel or novelist to heart. Otherwise a writer like Bhogindrarao Ratanlal Divetia (Bhogīndrarāv Ratanlāl Divēṭiyā, 1875–1917) would have a greater literary standing. He tried to regale readers with social stories such as *Mṛdulā* (1907), *Uṣākānt* (1907) and several others. His style was lucid and the stories were very readable, but the public did not respond.

Satirical Novel

Ramanbhai Mahipatram Neelkanth (Ramaṇbhāī Mahipatrām Nīlkaṇṭh, 1868–1928), by writing a solitary novel, *Bhadrambhadra* (Mr. All Is Well, 1900), achieved a standing in literature. He was a critic, poet and dramatist, but his only novel stands apart as the sole example in the Gujarati language of biting satire and broad humour. Through the years it has attained the position of a classic. In it, through his treatment of the character of an orthodox, old-fashioned Brahmin named Bhadrambhadra, the author has tried to break the back of orthodoxy by ridicule. He uses satire as a militant weapon of social reform. Though satire was not unknown in Gujarati literature before this, this was the first time it was used on such a vast scale.

But important as *Bhadrambhadra* was, as an instrument of change, it was not a work which could carry the novel forward in the language. And *Sarasvatīcandra* was such a milestone that no one dared to deviate from the path Govardhanram had laid.

Changes in Society

It was only when K. M. Munshi (Munṣi, 1887–1971) came on the scene of Gujarati letters that the whole art and craft of novel-writing underwent a sea-change. This became possible because the objective conditions of life in society had also changed.

The orthodox section of society still existed, of course, but the enlightened section had become more vocal and visible. Women were not only freer than before but they had begun to go to universities and also to take part in public activities. Their number was, naturally, small, but their influence was significant. People in general ridiculed them, through envy, but several admired them as well. Men and women had also begun to come together as had never been dreamt before, and this too helped in the creation of newer types of characters and situations. Political consciousness aroused much more than before by the activities of the leaders of the

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Indian National Congress and the Home Rule League made people more aware of the situation around them. The speeches that the leaders delivered were simpler in language than the ones of the preceding era, because more and more people were coming to listen to them. The ornate, stultified Sanskritized diction of the former lectures were no longer appealing.

As in speaking, so in writing. The old Sanskritized diction, which Govardhanram and others of his age had used, lost its charm with the new generation. They appreciated the style and diction in the writings of people of the past generation, but would not accept it from people of their own age.

K. M. Munshi. In every respect K. M. Munshi belonged to this new era. He was young, enthusiastic, full of vim and vigour and had fresh ideas about what constituted excellence in writing. He did not know much Sanskrit and could not stand its dominance. He also had a vision of life, perhaps not as wide as that of Govardhanram, but a vision nevertheless. He also had ideas about style and language which were entirely at variance with those of his predecessors.

Munshi was a lawyer by profession, and the legal luminaries of his day would not suffer one of their tribe to be wedded to anything but the law. The literary urge in Munshi was, however, crying for expression. So, adopting a pen-name 'Ghanśyam', he published his first novel, *Vērni Vasūlāt* (Revenge Fulfilled, 1913–14).

The publication of this book took Gujarat by storm. The language was simple, racy, non-pedantic, poetical. The subject was social, the characters came alive. The book pulsated with the throb of life.

Ghansyam became instantly famous. Encouraged by this, Munshi began to publish novel after novel, one superior to the other. As they gained wider popular appeal and literary recognition, he dropped the pseudonym and began writing in his own name.

After writing two social novels, Munshi found that they did not provide him sufficient opportunity to bring out the grandeur that was lying in his consciousness and to portray the larger-than-life characters he perceived. So he turned to historical and puranic backgrounds for his later novels. A trilogy that he wrote at this period of his life became so famous that Munshi's name became a household word in Gujarat.

This trilogy consists of *Pāṭaṇnī Prabhutā* (The Greatness of Patan, 1916), *Gujarātnō Nāth* (The Lord of Gujarat, 1919) and *Rājādhirāj* (The King of Kings, 1922), all independent stories, but which could be read in sequence, too. They deal with a historical period in the life of Gujarat, about a thousand years old. They mainly delineate two human passions—love and war. Some of the characters reflect the aspirations, emotions and ambitions of people the like of whom we do not usually encounter in everyday life. Some of the characters—Kak, Munjal, Manjari—are as much alive today as when they were created by Munshi.

A recurring character in Munshi's books is a very powerful woman, the equal of man. She is bold, independent and totally unafraid. There does not seem to be any likelihood of her being cowed by anybody. Yet at the end of each novel, she always succumbs to the will-power and strength of a man and becomes his 'slave'. At that stage all her pride is concentrated in calling him 'the master of her good fortune'. But it is not easy for any man to bring a woman of this type to this point. Such a man should be braver—for only the brave can win the fair—chivalrous, great of heart and willing to sacrifice anything for the lady of his heart. To achieve this situation Munshi used all the art at his command to produce a galaxy of such men and women.

Munshi wrote so profusely and continuously that sometimes loose ends remained in his work. Often the grandeur and greatness that he tried to depict were more the creations of his art of narration than the attributes of the characters he portrayed. Other charges can also be levelled against him and his art, but in spite of them, he remains a milestone in the history of the Gujarati novel. In addition to the trilogy, *Jai Sōmanāth*, *Parśurām*, *Kṛṣṇāvatār* and *Tapasvini*, notwithstanding all their defects and deficiencies, will long remain monuments to this eminent man of letters.

Gandhiji's Influence

While Munshi was producing novel after novel, another great influence was at work in the Gujarati language and in Indian life. That was Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948), who had arrived in India from South Africa, and who, about 1915, became active in the political and social life of India. Being a politician and having ideas of starting and leading mass movements in India, Gandhiji knew the value of the spoken and written word. Since he wished to communicate to millions through his speeches and writings, he wanted the language to be simple enough to be understood by the average man. So he deliberately evolved a simple yet effective style of prose which would go straight to the heart of his reader or listener.

The style Gandhiji adopted became the norm for writers who came after him. Before Gandhiji, Munshi had provided some idea of how effective this new kind of prose could be. Gandhiji put the final seal on the trend by evolving his own kind of prose which was perhaps even more effective than the romantically inclined prose of K. M. Munshi.

Another great influence Gandhiji had on writing in Gujarati was the great expansion of subject-matter that his activities and movements offered writers who came after him. The whole fabric of life in Gujarat changed after Gandhiji. Women were freer than before, and they fought shoulder to shoulder with the men in all the movements Gandhiji started; they were no longer a mystery or a figment

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of the imagination; they became real, tangible phenomena who could be portrayed much more realistically than before.

Again, literature which had remained mostly urban-oriented now turned to the villages, because Gandhiji's movements made the village real, with an identity of its own. No longer was a village cause for imaginative adulation or contempt, as it had been before.

The influence of Gandhiji permeated all spheres of society and it was not long before that influence became apparent in the sphere of literature, both in verse and prose.

Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai. The novelist who bore the clearest imprint of Gandhian influence was Ramanlal Vasantlal Desai (Ramaṇlāl Vasantlāl Dēsāī, 1892–1954), who, in novel after novel, described life in Gujarat with an idealistic, Gandhian overtone, though on the surface his treatment appeared quite realistic. There was a great number of love-affairs in his stories, but the kind of love these young men and women displayed was of a dignified nature. The sordid and the illicit did not find much place in his writings. One of Desai's outstanding novels is *Divyacakṣu* (The Divine Sight, 1932). The theme is all too clearly revealed through the title. In the story, a young man loses his eyesight in an idealistic encounter and a young woman, Ranjan, helps him through life in spite of everything. The story made many young men and women aspire to be people of this kind.

Ramanlal wrote many similar novels of a very idealistic tone, but, in the end, life and its realities caught up with him, and this idealistic writer, who aspired always to portray only the 'good' in life, was, towards the end of his life, forced to write a different kind of story. The powerful novel he wrote was called *Praḷaya* (Total Destruction, 1950). The title aptly describes the theme. One can well imagine what travail it must have been for the creator of the world of *Divyacakṣu* to climb down to the world of *Praḷaya*, in which everything is destroyed through the destructive element inherent in men. Here, too, the characters are not wicked, but the discoveries of science and their wrong use lead to the destruction of the world due to mankind's possessiveness and quest for power.

Other famous books by Ramanlal Desai are *Kōkila* (1928), *Bālājōgan* (The Young Yogini, 1952), which is a story about Meerabai, *Bhārēlō Agni* (Simmering Fires, 1935), which deals with a crucial moment in the history of India—the Indian mutiny, and *Grāmalakṣmi* (The Lakhsmi of the Villages, 4 volumes, 1933–37).

Ramanlal Desai had all the merits of an idealistic writer as well as the defects too. He tended to be prolix, sentimental, melodramatic and unrealistic. His craze for coining aphorisms became a hindrance to his art. His simple language sometimes ceased to be an instrument of artistic expression. Be that as it may, the fact remains that he held the attention of fiction-reading Gujarat for a number of years and he was widely translated into other Indian languages. In his writings he reflected the spirit of his age. A critic, Visvanath M. Bhatt aptly called him a *Yugamurti Vartakar* (A novelist reflecting his age).

The Regional Novel

Up to now the Gujarati novel had found authors who portrayed life in the cities only. The writer who could portray life in the smaller towns of Gujarat, which have an appeal of their own, was yet to come on the literary scene, though, due to the movements of Mahatma Gandhi, the smaller towns as well as the villages had come into their own. The time was now ripe for such a writer to appear, and he appeared in the person of Jhaverchand Meghani (Jhavercand Mēghāṇī, 1897–1947). Meghani's roots were in the small towns though his education and field of work were in the cities. His heart was where his roots were and thus, one day, he left the very promising service he was in and went back to his native Saurashtra. He did much research in the folk literature of Saurashtra and became the greatest exponent of the riches in that field. He also became a novelist of note and wrote many short stories and poems as well. His poems were of such patriotic fervour that Mahatma Gandhi called him *Rāṣṭrīya Ṣāyar* (The National Bard).

Meghani's novels were mostly confined to the lives of the middle and the lower middle classes in Saurashtra. The magic of his language was such that not only his characters but the whole of Saurashtra came alive through his pen. The sophistication of a standardized Gujarati language was given up by him and he wrote the language of the small-town man and the villager, whose native genius added a beauty of its own to the heritage of the Gujarati language. *Sōrath Tārān Vahētān Pāṇī* (Sorath, Your Waters Are Flowing, 1937) was one of his most famous novels. The word 'Sorath' (meaning Saurashtra) in the title suggests how enamoured he was of that region. Two other famous novels of his are *Tuḷasī Kayārō* (The Tulasi Plant, 1940) and *Vēviṣāḷ* (The Betrothal, 1939), both devoted to depicting life in Saurashtra. *Vēviṣāḷ* tells a typical tale of the life of a family in Saurashtra and narrates how the betrothal of a girl to a poor man's son is kept alive by the steadfast character of the girl as well as by the strong and inflexible will of her aunt. The uncle and the father, having become rich, prefer to break the engagement, but the steadfastness of these two women reveals to the readers the stuff of which Indian womanhood is made. All the currents of life in the region are portrayed with skill and sympathy.

Meghani has also written historical novels as well as a beautiful piece, *Prabhu Padhāryā* (The Lord Has Come, 1943), about people returning to India after Burma was overrun by the Japanese during the Second World War. But his fame as a novelist rests upon the works mentioned

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earlier. He will always be remembered as a man who wrote regional novels for the first time in the local language and who transformed what the learned called a dialect (the language spoken in parts of Saurashtra) into a literary language of unsurpassed beauty and power.

Other Writers of the Period

Among the other novelists of this period, Gunavantrai Acharya (Guṇavantrāi Ācārya, 1900–67) is known for his many novels of adventure. He also wrote about small-town life and about Saurashtra. His main contribution, however, is a novel called *Dariyālāl* (The Beloved Ocean, 1938). In this famous novel Gunavantrai has written a saga of adventure about the brave, adventurous sons of Gujarat and Saurashtra who sailed to many lands, including Africa, to trade and do business. Other novelists of the time include: Chunilal Vardhaman Shah (Cunilāl Vardhamān Śāh, 1887–1966), who wrote social and historical novels; Dhumketu (full name: Gauriśaṅkar Govardhanrām Jōśī, 1892–1965), the famous short-story writer of Gujarat who wrote historical novels; Jhinabhai Ratanji Desai (pseud.: Snēharaśmi, b. 1903), who wrote *Antarpat* (The Screen of Marriage, 1961) and Mohanlal Mehta (Sopan, b. 1910) who wrote some social novels. The humorists Jyotindra Dave (Jyotindra Dave, b. 1910) and Dhansukhlal Mehta (Dhanśukhlāl Mehta, 1890–1974) jointly wrote a novel called *Ame Badhān* (All of Us, 1935) which had a unique theme of pure humour. It was the only humorous novel after *Bhadrambhadra*, but it had no bitterness in it. It provided readers with some enjoyable insight into the life of the jolly city of Surat.

Translations and Adaptations

Translations were not unknown in Gujarati literature, but novels being a recent phenomenon, the only significant translations before this period were of Bulwer-Lytten's novel *Zanoni* and some of the better-known novels of the Bengali novelists. *Zanoni* was not actually translated but very perceptively adapted by Manilal Nabhubhai Dwivedi (Maṇilāl Nabhubhāi Dvivēḍī, 1858–98), who called his story *Gulābsingh*.

Later translations into Gujarati have included novels in foreign as well as Indian languages. Among the foreign language novels, several Russian works have been translated. Very good translations of Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (4 volumes) and *Kreutzer Sonata* have been done by Jayanti Dalal and Visvanath Bhatt respectively and of some other books by Chandrashankar Shukla. Bengali, Hindi and Marathi novels were favoured for translation into Gujarati. Between 1920 and 1950, most of the novels of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, such as *Śrīkānt*, *Devdās*, *Virāj Vahu* and *Devdās*, were translated into Gujarati. Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora* and *Gharebāhire* (The Sisters) were also translated during this period. The famous novelists, V. S. Khandekar (*Yayāti*, *Don Dhruva*) and S. N. Pendse (*Gārambhīcā Bāū*), had their best works translated into Gujarati. The Gujarati reader took to their works as he would to Gujarati novels, because the renderings were very good and were done by such able translators as Nagindas Parekh, Bhogilal Gandhi, Ramanlal Soni, from Bengali, and Gopalrao Vidwans from Marathi. Some stray translations from Hindi—*Godān* and *Premāśram* by Premchand, *Tyāgapatra* by Jainendra Kumar, as well as Yeshpal's work—were also published. But the translations of Sarat Chandra's and V. S. Khandekar's works for many years held the Gujarati reader's attention as no other translations did.

The World of the Villages

Pannalal Patel. The most significant novelist after K. M. Munshi is Pannalal Patel (Pannālāl Paṭēl, b. 1912). Pannalal is a sort of miracle in the world of Gujarati letters. He has had very little formal education—he did not complete high school—and his reading, very limited. Yet he has created such masterpieces in the novel form that his books will be read for years to come.

This has, perhaps, come about, because he has a very deep understanding of village life and first-hand experience of the people and places he writes about. Possessed of an innate understanding of motivations and an intuitive knowledge of all aspects of human nature, he has been able to create a whole world of the villages on the Rajasthani borders of Gujarat, transforming the spoken language of the region into a thing of artistic beauty.

Pannalal's first novel, *Vaḷāmaṇān* (The Sending-off, 1940), was proclaimed by Meghani the best novel of 1940. When *Maḷēla Jīva* (Twin Souls) was published the next year, the whole of Gujarat took this really powerful writer to its heart.

Maḷēla Jīva is a love story. Pannalal seems to feel that a novel should concern itself with the affairs of the heart, and so all his novels are tales of love. But *Maḷēla Jīva* is told in such an artistic manner that it has attained the grandeur of a classic. It is a story of the conflict in the heart of a married woman of a low caste who has fallen in love with a man of a higher caste. All the strands of life in a Gujarat village are brought out with vigour and delicacy. The final denouement, when the hero accepts this woman who has lost her beauty as well as her mental balance, has the cadences of a symphony.

Pannalal is a romantic and excels where the affairs of the heart are concerned. But another masterpiece of his, *Mānavīnī Bhavāī* (The Possessions of Man, 1949) has a wider spectrum of life to depict, though an affair of the heart is at its centre. The description in it of the great famine Gujarat

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experienced towards the end of the last century, and of life during that famine is masterly.

Though Pannalal has written many short stories, some of them of considerable literary value, his fame rests mainly on his novels with their poetic language and artistry. Though he has also written much that is not of great artistic value, when Gujarati novelists are graded he is considered only just below Govardhanram and Munshi. In recent years he has been writing novels with the theme of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata before him, but the pristine beauty of the earlier novels is missing in these writings.

Just as Pannalal Patel has brought the villages of Gujarat to the Gujarati novel, Chunilal Madia (Cunīlāl Maḍiyā, 1922–68) has brought alive the villages of Saurashtra. Jhaverchand Meghani had dealt with Saurashtra much before Madia, but that was the Saurashtra of the small town and of the middle and lower middle classes. Madia's world is the world of the villages. By his uncanny descriptions and his mastery over the language of those parts of Saurashtra, Madia has, in novel after novel, brought alive the villages and their people. What he lacks, however, is a sense of a perfect conception of the themes he tries to handle. His great dedication to sometimes unnecessary detail also detracts from his work. Even so, his novels like *Vela Velani Canyadi* (The Tide and the Ebb of Time, 1956) and *Liludi Dharti* (The Green Earth, 1957) have held the rapt attention of people in general and have been appreciated as good pieces of literature by critics. Unfortunately his life was cut short at a comparatively young age.

Ishwar Petlikar (Īśvar Pēṭlīkar, b. 1916) and Pitambar Patel (Pitāmbar Paṭēl, 1918–77) are two other writers who have written prolifically about village life. Petlikar's *Janamṭīp* (Life Sentence, 1944) and *Haiya Sagdi* (A Furnace in the Heart, 1950) have been well appreciated, as has Pitambar Patel's *Khētarnē Khōḷē* (In the Lap of the Fields, 1953). Pushker Chandervaker (b. 1921) is another novelist who has imaginatively portrayed his part of Saurashtra.

Darshak and Joshi. Before we turn to the post-Gandhi and post-Independence era, the work of two novelists should be mentioned. Though both Manubhai Pancholi (Manubhāī Pañcōlī, b. 1914; pseud.: Darśak) and Shivkumar Joshi (Śivkumār Jōśī, b. 1916) have been writing continuously up to the present, their work bears the stamp of the era that ended in 1947.

Of the two, Darshak is a true Gandhian both in life and literature. His best works bear the imprint of his idealism. His famous novel *Zēr Tō Pildhān Chē Jāṇī Jāṇī* (I Have Drunk Poison Willingly, 1952–58) is a cry for the values which were once very dear to all of us and which we are fast losing. His hero is a sort of thinker-philosopher, like the hero of Govardhanram's *Sarasvatīcandra*, but he is, naturally, tuned to a different key. The heroine is also an ideal woman. The conflict is as much in the heart as in the circumstances that take the hero to western lands where he comes in touch with the political life and currents there. But for the loose structure and emphasis on the external phenomena of life and events, this book would certainly have been one of the outstanding novels in Gujarati.

Another really ambitious attempt of his is his recent novel *Socrates* (1974). As the title suggests, the work deals with the life of the great Greek thinker. The author is a very keen student of history and thought, and this novel bears ample testimony to that. The idealistic temperament of Darshak finds full expression in dealing with the life and times of this great thinker, around whom the author has woven his own philosophy of life. Characters are well drawn in this novel, but this work also suffers a little on account of the views that the author wants to express taking precedence over the requirements of art. It remains a valuable contribution to Gujarati literature all the same.

Though Shivkumar Joshi is not a Gandhian *per se*, his world is nevertheless the world of the era that ended around 1947. This author has covered many fields in his several novels, but his main concern is the depiction of the affairs of the heart—both illicit and otherwise. His early novel *Kancukībandh* (The Knot of the Brassiere, 1956) drew attention to him as an outspoken novelist. His more ambitious work is *Ābha Ruve Eni Navalakh Dhare* (The Sky is Weeping in all its Abandon, 1964), which, in its two volumes, covers a very big canvas of life. His best novel, however, is *Sonal Chāi* (The Golden Shadow, 1967), a very small work. Perhaps its very brevity has made this novel outstanding, its compactness saving the author from bringing in details, descriptions and irrelevant incidents which usually mar the art.

Vithal Pandya, Rasik Mehta, Sarang Barot, Jashwant Mehta are other popular novelists of this period.

New Influences

The concept of life to be portrayed in fiction changed in Gujarat, and possibly in the whole of India, round about 1947, as a result of the waning of Gandhiji's influence on the subject-matter of writing. There were now new influences and new ways of thinking and looking at the world brought about by the changing world conditions about the time India attained Independence. People who had fondly thought that as soon as Independence was achieved life would change for the better in India were disillusioned very swiftly. People were faced with want, dishonest politicians and new values. Moral life was disintegrating everywhere.

What was the use in looking outward then, writers and artists wondered. Instead, they began looking inwards to find a world worth creating. If this inner world was to be created, the language, the technique and the tools were

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have to be different. The language should be more pointed and precise, the narration more symbolic, mythical and clad in images and dreams. The place of the beautiful and the pure had to be taken by the description of the ugly and the impure, the place of hope and joy by despair and melancholy. The psychological should replace the social. Technique should reign supreme. Beauty lay in the construction, the structure of the art-object, and technique and form were the things that endowed that object with real beauty.

The first glimmer of this new influence, may, perhaps, be seen in a novel by Jayanti Dalal (Jayanti Dalāl, 1909–70) called *Dhimu Anē Vibhā* (1940). This novel was written in a new manner. Its story was told in the form of the reflections, of its main protagonist, Dhimant. Through these reflections, the man, his outlook, the objective conditions as seen through his subjective reflections, and the girl Vibha assume form, sequence and coherence. As a novel it may not be rated very high, but as an influence it cannot be dismissed lightly. Umashankar Joshi's (Umāśaṅkar Jōśī, b. 1911) novel *Pārkān Jaṇyām* (Others' Offspring, 1940), though not necessarily of the new type, is more psychologically than socially oriented. His poetry, short story and criticism have overshadowed this single novel. It is not a particularly powerful novel, but it should certainly be mentioned when the Gujarati novel is discussed.

The Modern Novel

The writings of Suresh Joshi (Surēś Jōśī, b. 1921) have had a profound influence on the Gujarati novel. Joshi revolutionized the art of short-story writing, introduced new ideas about criticism and wrote poems in a new vein. Since 1957, when his first collection of short stories, *Gṛhapraveś* (Entering the House), was published, he has been considered the apostle of modernity in Gujarati literature. The publication of his short novel *Chinnapatra* (Torn Leaves, 1966) enhanced his reputation.

Though the author himself called this work not a novel but a 'draft for a projected novel', his admirers raved about the merits of the book. It tells the tragic story of the love of Ajay and Mala, who try to find fulfilment in each other but are not able to do so with their physical bodies. Ajay is dead, but he lives on in Mala, who, though physically embraced by another male, continues to hear the voice of Ajay. The story element is negligible in this book, but the language, the technique, the treatment and the symbols dominate. Because of this, the novel is rather ethereal and unreal and seems to be meant only for a coterie of moderns, not for the general fiction-reading intelligentsia.

If Suresh Joshi tells a slight story, Chandrakant Bakshee (Candrakānt Bakṣī, b. 1932) revels in telling a story, but he does it in such a new manner that he differs radically from his predecessors. He is a profuse writer, but it was with his novel *Ākār* (The Shape, 1963) that he broke new ground.

Ākār is an existentialist story whose protagonist fumbles around trying to discover the real shapes of things, but fails. The protagonist is a product of the industrial civilization, a man who thirsts to be happy, who wants to be honest and who wants to live according to the dictates of his conscience and feelings. He is quite an ordinary man. But his whole story is woven in such a novel manner that *Ākār*, perhaps more than Suresh Joshi's *Chinnapatra*, deserves to be called the first truly modern novel.

Chandrakant Bakshee's other acclaimed novel *Paralysis* (1967) is much pleasanter to read. It is the story of a father and a daughter, and is quite innocent of the vulgarity and grossness that 'modern' subject-matter usually implies. But it is modern all the same. Its approach, its rhythm, the thoughts and actions of the characters all belong to this generation alone. Bakshee's later writings do not have the freshness, vigour and artistry of these two masterpieces.

Mohammad Mankad (Mohammad Māṅkaḍ, b. 1928) appeared to have considerable promise when his *Kayar* (The Coward, 1959) and his more ambitious *Dhummas* (The Fog, 1965) were published. He, however, could not carry on for long with this existentialist type of writing finally drifting to more commercial writing. He has been writing continuously, but apart from two other small pieces, which are quite beautiful, he has belied his early promise of greatness, though he is very pleasant to read. The two short efforts are *Vañcita* (The Deceived, 1963) and *Ajānyān Be Jaṇ* (Two Unknown Persons).

A noteworthy writer of the third quarter of the century is Madhu Rai (Madhu Rāi, 1942), whose work is modern in every sense of the word. His originality is striking. He has struck a new path for himself. That path does not at any point cross the paths taken by Suresh Joshi or Chandrakant Bakshee. The method, the manner and the subject-matter of his two novels *Cahera* (Faces, 1966) and *Kāmini* (1970) illustrate the truth of this statement.

Cahera is about Nishad, a mutilated young man, whose story is also told in a mutilated form. There is no chronological sequence in the story. Yet, as one goes on reading, the story arranges itself into a sequence and the whole face of Nishad, which is subdivided into so many faces as a result of the different phases through which he has passed, becomes fully visible. It is the face of contemporary man, trying to be an entity but failing in his efforts.

Cahera was a first attempt of this young writer. *Kāmini*, on the other hand, is a more mature effort at discovering an identity where none exists. The predicament of contemporary man is that he has become an automaton, a number without a personality, a mere name. Kamini is one such person. Everyone who comes in touch with her finds a different Kamini in one and the same person. Everyone who knows her, goes through life with his or her different

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notion about her. Even Kamini herself has not a clear idea of what she herself really is. When she tries to discover herself she miserably fails. She only realizes that she is not an individual, a person, but a number of fragments.

Another novel in the new manner is *Asti* (Existence, 1966) by Shreekant Shah (Śrīkānt Śāh). This book also deals with the problem of existence as its very name suggests. *Palanan Pratibimba* (The Reflections of the Moment, 1966) by Harindra Dave (Harīndra Dave, b. 1930), the well-known poet, is a novel not to be ignored. But *Nightmare* (1969) by Saroj Pathak (Saroj Pāṭhak, b. 1929), strangely enough, is ignored by readers and critics. Perhaps the merits of the book are overshadowed by the defects arising out of the consciousness of the writer that she is trying to do something entirely new. Her short stories are better appreciated.

A more enduring work is *Vadavānala* (The Submarine Fire, 1963) by Dhiruban Patel (Dhiruban Paṭēl, b. 1926). It is a big psychological novel dealing with the jealousy between two sisters, the result of which is extraordinary. The author has delineated her characters with understanding and narrated the whole story with delicacy, charm and finesse. *Vansno Aṅkur* (The Sprout of the Bamboo, 1967) is another noteworthy though small novel by the same writer. *Parodh Thatan Pahelan* (Before the Dawn Breaks) by Kundanika Kapadia (Kundanika Kāpaḍiyā, b. 1927) is a novel in which the author tries to explore the roots of many emotions.

A writer who has attained both eminence and popular acclaim in recent years is Raghuvir Chaudhuri (Raghuvīr Caudhuri, b. 1938) whose novel *Amṛta* (1965) and trilogy *Vāsa Trayi* (Three Places of Residence) have won him fame. In the trilogy he depicts life in the villages in his part of the country, as Pannalal Patel has done, but his writing is in an entirely different key and he has displayed considerable literary skill.

Radheshyam Sharma's (Rādheśyām Śarmā, b. 1936) *Phero* (The Turn, 1968) is a wonderful short novel probing deep-lying human motives. Jyotish Jani's (Jyotiṣ Jani, b. 1928) *Chākhadiye Chadine Chālya Hasamukhalāl* (Hasamukhlal is Moving on His Sandals, 1970) is a very successful satire, perhaps the only one after *Bhadrambhadra*. Another single work which has won fame for its writer is *Mahābhiniṣkraman* (The Great Departure, 1968) by Mukund Parikh.

Ravji Patel (Ravji Paṭēl, 1939–68) wrote only two novels before he died at a very young age. They were *Aṣrughar* (The House of Tears, 1967) and *Zanza* (The Tornado, 1967). *Zanza* ranks very high on account of its artistry. Bhagvatikumar Sharma's (Bhagvatikumār Śarmā, b. 1934) *Samayadwīp* (The Island of Time, 1974) has also won acclaim, as have some novels by Pinakin Dave (b. 1935) and Varshā Adalija (b. 1940). Harkiśan Mehta is a popular novelist.

The novel in Gujarati is over a century old. The vicissitudes of life are reflected quite faithfully in this branch of literature.

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Hindi

NIRMALA JAIN

Hindi literature has a long and rich tradition of poetry, which can easily be traced to at least the 11th century. But the development of prose forms is, historically, a much later event. Attempts have very often been made to trace the origin of tale telling to the Pali texts, namely, the *jātakas* and the didactic tales of the *Hitopadeśa*, but they have hardly anything in common with the modern novel, which in Hindi originated during the late 19th century, mainly due to the impact of western literature, directly, as well as, through Bengali.

The First Phase

The first phase of development of the Hindi novel (*upanyās* in Hindi) was roughly between 1875 and 1915. During this period the inherent legacy of the court poetry of the preceding age was extended in the prose form of the novel by novelists unable to shed the influence of the court traditions. These authors fail to show any social consciousness or a realistic approach either in the choice or in the treatment of their subjects.

Ironically enough, the first novel in Hindi, *Parīkṣā Guru* (Test the Teacher) written in 1882 by Shrinivas Das (Śrinivāsa Dāsa, 1850–87), is about the life of a middle-class trader. The novel successfully portrays the life-style of the contemporary middle-class trading society as well as the problems created in it by the generation gap. Its approach is realistic, its tone socio-ethical, but, surprisingly, in spite of its fresh theme, it did not set a trend. Some stray works such as *Nūtan Brahmacārī* (The New Celebate, 1886) and *Sau Ajān Ek Sujān* (1890) by Balkrishna Bhatta (Bālakṛṣṇa Bhaṭṭa, 1844–1914), *Nissahāy Hindū* (The Helpless Hindu) by Radha Krishna Das (Rādhā Kṛṣṇa Dāsa, 1865–1907) and *Ṭheṭh Hindī ka Ṭhaṭ* (The Charm of Indigenous Hindi, 1899) by Ayodhya Singh Upadhyaya (Ayodhyā Simha Upādhyāya, 1865–1941) followed this pattern, but they did not match *Parīkṣā Guru* in content, form or style. These as well as a few others of the time failed to establish a tradition of the social novel in Hindi. The main point in some of these novels has been to expose the so-called corrupting influence of the West and try to establish new values. The approach of their authors is partially modern, in the sense that they realize that the old order is worn out. But their conservatism is obvious when they attribute the cause of this breakdown entirely to western influence.

Broadly speaking, three main trends in the Hindi novel can be noted during this first phase of development. The most dominant was the mystery-adventure novel. The name of Devakinandan Khatri (Devakīnandana Khatrī, 1861–1913) is virtually synonymous with this trend. His importance to the Hindi novel cannot be overstressed. With his mystery stories interwoven with adventure, he created a taste for the novel not only among Hindi readers but also among those who did not know Hindi. The curiosity of the latter was aroused to such an extent that thousands of them acquired a working knowledge of Hindi in order to read Devakinandan's novels. His novels appear to conjure up a totally unreal world of mystery enabling the reader to escape from the harsh realities of life. But a deeper study reveals that his works reflect, in their own way, the feudalism of those days. Devakinandan's characters belong to the princely class and the aristocracy, but their loves and adventures are such that even the common reader is enraputred by their exploits.

The spirit of chivalry found in Devakinandan's novels acquires a different tone in the later novels of Durga Prasad Khatri (Durgā Prasāda Khatrī, b. 1895). In his famous novels such as *Rakta Maṇḍal* (The Blood Zone, 1927) and *Kālā Cor* (The Black Thief, 1932), there are characters who breathe the spirit of revolution. The reader discovers here the seeds of hostility towards foreign rule. Another important feature of these stories is the impact the scientific discoveries of the New World have on them. The main characters of the novels perform several scientific feats in an otherwise feudal set-up. Here are the beginnings of science fiction. These novels are much too fantastic to be scientific in any sense of the term, but what matters is the awareness of the writer about the achievement of science and his willingness to use this knowledge in literature.

The detective novel came into prominence with the works of Gopal Ram Gahmari (Gopālā Rāma Gahmarī, 1866–1946). The characters in his novels too show the impact of scientific discoveries on their modes of operation.

Love is the dominant theme of the second important trend in the Hindi novel of this period. The characteristics of the court poetry of the later medieval period can clearly be seen in the novels of Kishori Lal Goswami (Kiśorī Lāla Gosvāmī, 1865–1932). His novels can roughly be classified into categories, such as historical, social, pseudo-romantic, etc. but in all of them the theme is love and its treatment is largely influenced by traditional court poetry. Love here is more of a poetic convention than a contemporary social reality. Goswami's characters are

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normally middle class. Ram Lal Varma (Rāma Lāla Vermā), his contemporary, however, goes a step further, portraying his characters exaggerated under the influence of Urdu poetry and the Parsee Theatre. The novels of both these writers present a very narrow and lopsided view of the social realities of the times.

The third trend during this period is to be seen in the emotional novel, which was written in a somewhat lyrical vein. Braj Nandan Sahay (Braja Nandana Sahāya, b. 1874) is the main exponent of this kind of novel, though his jerky plots, held together by a string of emotive lyrical situations, ornate diction and complex sentences, hardly justify his works being called novels.

Apart from these categories, there are in this period stray examples of some didactic novels, generally based on puranic or social themes, but there is hardly any commitment to contemporary social reality.

There were some translations of English and Bengali novels which, in their own way contributed to this new literary genre in Hindi, but the tastes of the readers were reflected in the choice of the translations. The number of novels with social and cultural themes are much less than detective and mystery novels and novels with erotic themes, such as *Mysteries of the Court of London*. A novel like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was an exception. Some serious novels such as *Durgeśnandinī*, *Bangavijetā* and *Kṛṣṇa Kānta kā Vaisīyatnāmā* were translated from Bengali.

The Premchand Era

The advent of Premchand (Premacanda, 1880–1936) marks the dawn of a new era in the history of the Hindi novel. The most significant feature of his novels is the seriousness of purpose underlying them. His novels are characterized by a spirit of idealism and a deep concern for the society around. The themes are problem-oriented and are drawn from the day-to-day lives of the middle classes—lower and upper, rural and urban. The upper class often serves as a contrast or as a backdrop to the life of the lower middle classes and is quite often the cause of their problems. Premchand has very often been accused of imposing impractical ethical solutions to the problems he poses. There is often an effort to resolve realistic problems with idealistic solutions that are impracticable and didactic. Sometimes there are unnatural and sudden transformations of his characters. For example, Suman, the heroine of his first mature work *Sevāsadana* (The Service Home, 1919) gives up her profession as a result of one single sermon. *Sevāsadana* was followed by *Premāśrama* (Abode of Love, 1921) and *Raṅgabhūmi* (The Arena of Life, 1925). *Raṅgabhūmi* shows traces of Gandhian influence in its theme as well as in the main character Suradasa. Other significant novels of Premchand are *Nirmalā* (1926), *Karmabhūmi* (The Field of Action, 1932), *Kāyākalpa* (Metamorphosis, 1926), *Gaban* (Embezzlement, 1931) and *Godān(a)* (The Gift of a Cow, 1936). His last novel, *Maṅgala Sūtra* (The Wedlock Thread, 1948) is incomplete.

After 1920 there is a definite maturity and expansion of canvas in Premchand's works. He remains unsurpassed as a novelist of social values. He is a novelist of the classes as well as of the masses. His last finalized work, *Godāna*, is a novel of epic dimensions. It presents a live picture of rural India with all its conflicts and pathos. The most notable feature of this work is that, unlike his previous writings, it does not deviate from reality. *Godāna* is the tale of Hori, the typical symbol of the Indian peasant—uneducated, poor and conservative. His life's wish is to be able to give away a cow, by way of charity to a Brahmin. This lifelong desire which he cherishes and struggles to fulfil till his death, symbolizes many similar conventions, prevalent among his class. The hard reality of life and the socio-economic structure in which he is placed, ultimately leave him a total wreck, and he dies a tragic death with his life's mission unfulfilled. It is the man against the whole system which is class-ridden. There is the zamindar, the money lender, the Brahmin, i.e. the different facets of establishment, which through a process, a life-style, reduce the entire being of the Indian peasant to nothingness. The rebel against the system is portrayed by Hori's wife Dhanya. The weak and submissive Hori along with the strong and rebellious Dhanya complete the story of the struggle of the Indian peasant—the dilemma and the contradictions in which he is caught. *Godāna* is a landmark in the development of the Hindi novel with its vivid presentation of India's rural life, its commitment to the cause of the struggling peasant class, and its sensitive portrayal of some memorable characters such as the tragic hero and his wife. With this classic, the Hindi novel attained a height which is still unsurpassed.

Premchand and his contemporaries have mainly adopted social problems as the themes of their novels. Various problems faced by the women of India have particularly caught their attention. Premchand's *Sevāsadana* deals with the problem of prostitution. In *Nirmalā* he deals with the implications of ill-matched marriages. The sad plight of the widow, problems of dowry, child marriages and bigamy loom large in the works of several novelists of this period. Vishambhar Nath Kaushik (Visambhara Nātha Kauśika, 1891–1945), Bhagwati Prasad Vajpeyi (Bagavati Prasāda Vājapeyī, b. 1899), Chatursen Shastri (Caturasena Śāstrī, 1891–1960), Jainendra Kumar (b. 1905) are some important writers who have dealt with themes related to the problems of Indian women who have been an oppressed class in Indian society for centuries.

Free love is also a favourite theme of the novelists of this period, to whom Rabindranath Tagore had already shown the way in his *Ghare Bāhire*. Jainendra's *Sunītā* (1935) grapples with the problem of extramarital infatuation, but thereby challenging the whole institution of marriage, but

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there is a constant feeling of guilt in the minds of the parties concerned and the author has not had the courage to justify such a relationship. In his other novels too we come across the struggle of modern women against traditional sex-morality. The author, however, fails to support the spirit of revolt and more often than not ends by glorifying the conventional concept of womanhood. Jainendra's approach to this problem is not very different in his later novels too. In *Tyāgapatra* (Resignation, 1937) and *Sukhadā* (1953) the revolt of the Indian woman against the institution of marriage is there, but the main characters are generally masochistic. The heroine of *Tyāgapatra* is a slightly more positive and assertive character, but even she is not very sure of her ground. The heroine of *Sukhadā* ultimately lands in a sanatorium. The problems of all these women appear to be more the problems of individuals in a dilemma. That is precisely the reason why Jainendra has been regarded as the pioneer of the psycho-analytical trend in Hindi fiction. Women not only occupy dominant roles in his fiction, but also possess unusual character traits. These traits do not find expression on the exterior level in their behaviour pattern as participants in the incidents of life but they are unfolded at a very intimate, inner level, which lends psycho-analytical complexity to the treatment and style. At places it even touches a philosophical or rather pseudo-philosophical note which apparently creates the illusion of a high-serious approach to the theme. It was on this account that in the beginning, as compared to the objective realism of Premchand which operated on the surface of life, Jainendra's intricate and subjective treatment not only appeared different, but also created the illusion of highbrow intellectualism, depth and subtlety. It is not accidental that Jainendra preferred a self-conscious autobiographical style for some of his novels. Even those novels which have been written as narratives, are notable for a peculiar mannerism of language.

Another very significant theme to be found in the novels of this period is the problem of untouchability. Premchand's *Karmabhūmi* deals with it in a multidimensional manner. Other themes found in novels of this period relate to life in brothels, orphanages, widow-homes, etc. Such novels were written to expose the corrupt and hypocritical set-ups in these institutions. No major work, however, has been written in this strain, though some are starkly realistic. Chatursen Shastri (Catursen Sastri) and Pandey Bechan Sharma Ugra (Pāṇḍeya Becana Śarmā Ugra, b. 1900) are two authors who have handled these themes particularly well.

It is unfortunate that not many writers followed Premchand's footsteps. Premchand stands alone in giving a strong socio-realistic bias to the Hindi novel. His approach is remarkably secular. Though the Marxist concept of a class struggle had not assumed major proportions till the time of Premchand, he was nevertheless conscious of it. No writer of his time could escape the influence of Gandhism. It is not a mere accident that Premchand too has chosen many of the problems which had figured in Gandhi's writings, but he has a more progressive outlook than his contemporaries. He realized that the roots of internal disharmony did not lie in Indian culture but in the tactics of the rulers and their henchmen, the officials and the police, the *pandits* and the *maulvis*, who have all become instruments of exploitation.

Premchand's dilemma is that he is neither able to fully accept nor totally ignore the emerging horizons. His role is more that of a traditional reformer than that of a modern thinker. But this is more a limitation of his age than of Premchand himself. New values had not assumed a definite form, they were only in the making. But the urge and struggle to establish them was unmistakable and it is not just an accident that Premchand's *Godāna*, Jainendra's *Sunītā*, Bhagwaticharan Varma's (Bagavatīcaraṇa Varmā, b. 1903) *Citralekhā* (1934) and Ajneya's (b. 1911) *Śekhar: ek Jīvanī* (Shekhar: A Biography, 1940–44) were published in almost the same decade of the 20th century.

Some novelists tried to probe into basic human problems in greater depth. Jai Shanker Prasad's (Jaya Śaṅkara Prasāda, 1889–1937) *Kaṅkāla* (Skeleton, 1929) and Jainendra Kumar's *Sunītā* and *Tyāgapatra* are examples of this approach to social problems. But the authors are ironical rather than compromising in their tone. Their protest against various social institutions is more subtle, psychological and fundamental. This generation of writers, which grew with Premchand, found itself divided by cultural traditions on the one hand and the need for a modern outlook on the other.

Quest for Moral Values

The new phase may be described as a quest for new moral values. The search for ready or Utopian solutions was more or less given up and the post-Premchand novelist started looking for convincing explanations—psychological or sociological. He wanted to understand and analyze rather than condemn or idealize. Thus an effort to search for a new reality or redefine the old value-structure is the predominant note of the novels of this phase. *Citralekhā* and *Śekhar: ek Jīvanī* are notable examples. The basic concern of the author of *Citralekhā* is to reassess and define moral values anew. The problem of drawing a clear line of demarcation between the entire structure of the so-called opposites—good and evil, the true and the false, reality and illusion, the individual and society—is the central theme of this novel. The historical background is only a device the author has adopted to make his theme colourful. The novel exposes the hollowness of philosophical shams which had swayed the Indian mind for ages. Some critics have traced the inspiration of *Citralekhā* to *Thais* of Anatole France. There is some similarity in the plots of the two, but the structure of *Citralekhā* is its

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own. Two desciples of Mahaprabhu Ratnambara pose the question 'What is a sin?' to the preceptor and he sends one to the feudal lord Bijagupta and the other to the ascetic Kumaragiri for the answer. The famous dancer Chitralekha, the beautiful companion of Bijagupta, is infatuated by Kumaragiri at a later stage but gives him up, the moment he responds to her, to return to Bijagupta, because according to her 'a woman can love only a man who has the capacity to win her'. The two disciples get the answer to their question in the course of action and interrelation of the three principal characters. The novel enjoyed immense popularity with the Hindi-reading public for a whole decade.

Śekhar: ek Jīvanī, unlike *Citralekhā*, rejects the historical garb and directly poses the problem of morality in the man-woman relationship. Adopting an autobiographical style, the author discusses a number of psychological and social problems of the modern man. The psychic make-up of the individual in his new environment is treated in depth at the conscious and subconscious levels of his sensibility. The abnormal conditions of modern life, presented against the background of India's National Movement, account for the complex structure of the novel, which is permeated with social content. It is not an accident that a revolutionary hero—inspired by feelings of nationalism and actively engaged in the struggle for freedom—is caught up with a personal problem posed either by extramarital love or by a kind of relationship which is not justifiable by conventional social ethics. Ajneya's Shekhar and Jainendra's Hariprasanna (*Sunītā*) and Harida (*Sukhadā*) are notable examples in whom one might discern some traces of Tagore's Sandipa (*Ghare Bāhire*). The revolutionary male characters of Jainendra, however, take to this destructive role with a vengeance, having faced rejection in love. They are frustrated lovers and therefore, readily submit to any expression of love, sympathy or caress of a woman. Shekhar on the other hand is an egoist, self-centred or self-obsessed to the extent that no other character finds much scope for development. Other characters exist only in his memory and do not function like independent living beings. He very sensitively looks within himself and not outside. It appears that the world exists only in relevance to him and not in spite of him. The author has defined the novel as a 'most intimate personal document of an individual' and has executed this document in an autobiographical style using psychoanalytical method.

The novel in the Premchand era emphasized society, not the individual. The novel of the later phase concentrates on the psychic strains the individual is faced with in the social order and is concerned with the question of identity versus totality. In the process, the novel also portrays the acute tension between the inner and the outer self of the individual and the resultant tragedy of modern man. This does not, however, mean that it was entirely a protest against or a negation of the existing order. There was also a silver lining, the quest for a new order.

Another significant feature of the post-Premchand novel is the influence of Marx and Freud on it. Marxism underlined a particular socio-economic order, interpreting everything else in its context. Freud's psychology of the unconscious laid stress on the inner complexes and intricacies of the human mind.

Broadly speaking, there are three main trends in the post-Premchand novel. These may be summed up as follows:

(i) Novels with a quest for new moral values essentially different from the social code accepted in Premchand's novels is the first. The question of moral values raised by the author of *Citralekhā* has been treated by different authors in different ways. Two writers who have concentrated on the psychological aspects of the problem, in the context of the individual, are Jainendra Kumar and Ilachandra Joshi (Ilācandra Jośī, b. 1902). Their approach is basically humane, their method psychoanalytical. These novelists, probing the tragedy of emotive life, study the individual not as a part of society, but as a victim of social conventions. An utter disregard for social values and the ethical code sometimes results in sickly eroticism. In fact, sex in general and even sexual perversions, provide the main theme of many a novel during this period.

This new approach was a result of probing deep into the subconscious and unconscious levels of the human mind. Psychoanalysis and a study of human behaviour by the cause-effect method found favour with novelists such as those mentioned above. The irony is that though they have tried to be modern, they have still found it difficult to get over the pressures of traditional values. In Ilachandra Joshi's novels, characters sometimes appear to be case-studies rather than real human beings. It is one thing to analyse the beahaviour patterns of normal human beings; it is quite another thing to create abnormal characters on the basis of psychoanalytical case-studies. And abnormal, unrealistic characters are what several such writings have created.

(ii) The second trend did away with the ambiguity, confusion or lack of confidence regarding values found in the works of Jainendra and Ilachandra Joshi. Situations tense with psychological complexes found in the novels of Jainendra and Joshi are here portrayed as normal rather than abnormal situations. The problems of ego, displaced emotions and other inner conflicts are portrayed in these novels not as expressions of frustration but as real problems that have to be faced with new values at new levels of social consciousness. *Śēkhar: ek Jīvanī* is the most significant work among novels following this trend. Dev Raj (Deva Rāja, b. 1917) has also tried to experiment on similar lines in his *Patha kī Khoj* (The Search for a Path, 1951), but is not as successful as Ajneya. The individual attains a greater significance and dignity here and the story is, to a large extent, dominated by the portrayal of character.

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In *Nadī ke Dvīpa* (Islands in the River, 1952), by Ajneya, is found the culmination of the modern man-woman relationship at the individual level. This book poses a number of questions regarding the ethical or moral structure vis-a-vis the individual, and tends to favour the latter. The conflict between objective situations and subjective emotions has been remarkably handled by Ajneya, whose subtle treatment of the conflict is notable for a sensitivity verging on lyricism.

(iii) The influence of Marxist ideology may be seen in the works of those novelists who wrote about social realities. Their realism, however, is different from that of Premchand. They depict social situations on the basis of class-structure. The most significant exponent of this trend is Yashpal (Yaśapāla, 1903–76), who wrote a number of significant novels such as *Deśadrohī* (The Traitor, 1943), *Dādā Komreḍ* (The Leader Comrade, 1941), etc. As is obvious from their titles, these novels present a committed approach to reality. Amrit Rai (Amrta Rāi, b. 1921) and Nagarjun (b. 1910) are also authors of this school. In the works of certain other minor novelists, however, the writers have neither done justice to ideology nor to the reality of the life which they have chosen as the subject of their novels. What emerges has been described as pseudo-realism by some critics. Wherever they are faced with the dilemma of choosing between dialectical materialism and the realities of life, they opt for ideology, thus preventing a genuine understanding of life and human problems. This approach has done positive damage to the Hindi novel as an art form. Their loosely woven plots are unreal and the emotions and realities of life are submitted to a set pattern of Utopian frameworks. Rahul Sankrityayan (1893–1963) has often been accused of these shortcomings. Some of Yashpal's novels also are not free from them.

The Middle Way

Steering their way between these two types of novels, there are novelists who are committed both to social as well as personal reality. Consequently objective reality and subjective reaction found expression in their novels. The main concern of these novelists is the life of their own middle class. They are novelists of the post-Second World War era, who have been witnesses to all the frustrations and sufferings of the middle class and have been totally disillusioned by the idealism of Premchand's age as well as the dogma of the progressive writers. Their writings are rooted primarily in personal experience, but their approach is not neurotic nor is their subject-matter the self. The authenticity of experience is the keynote of these novels that deal with the middle-class individuals.

Change of subject and approach necessitated a change of form also. The new structure may be seen in the experiments of Dharmavir Bharati (Dharma Vīra Bhāratī, b. 1926), Rajendra Yadav (Rajendra Yādava, b. 1929), Mohan Rakesh (Mohan Rākeśa, 1925–72) and Girdhar Gopal. All that has been written by way of such experiment, however, has not been successful.

These writers, conscious of the variety of human experience laid stress on human sensibility and attempted to evolve a new value-structure. One rarely comes across any kind of perversion, in the name of reality, in their novels. Instead of giving importance to degeneration, they have tried to discover new values in new contexts—an approach which makes them progressive as well as modern. These writers are also conscious of an emerging new craft in the Hindi novel. Most of these novelists of the post-Second World War period have experimented with the craft of fiction. Bharati's *Sūraj kā Sātvāṁ Ghoḍā* (The Seventh Horse of the Sun, 1954), Yadav's *Pret Bolte Haiṁ* (The Ghosts Speak, 1952) and Girdhar Gopal's *Cāṁdnī ke Khaṇḍahar* (The Relics of Moonlight) are examples of this experimentation. For that matter, Ajneya had made a start in this direction even earlier in his *Śekhar: ek Jīvanī*—the most significant Hindi novel written in an autobiographical style.

The Historical Novel

Along with the social novels, there has been a parallel stream of historical novels during the second quarter of this century. The fact that this stream of historical fiction-writing runs parallel to the National Movement, to a certain extent, has determined its overall character. Earlier writers revived a glorious past to generate feelings of pride and encourage the spirit of sacrifice for the national cause. This was an escape from the present as well as an attempt to corelate the past and the present, and impart a new meaning to the latter. The effort to salvage Indian history from the biased interpretations of western historians also cannot be ruled out as a partial motive for the Hindi historical novels.

The historical novel in India, was, to a great extent, influenced by Dumas and Walter Scott. Vrindavan Lal Verma (Vṛndāvana Lāla Varmā, 1889–1969) has written some popular historical romances, fusing history and folklore. *Mṛganayanī* (1950), *Gaḍha Kuṇḍār* (The Fort of Kundar, 1929) and *Virāṭā kī Padminī* (1930) are some of his major historical novels in which he reaffirms a faith in India's cultural traditions and glorious past. This was really an oblique expression of nationalism in art, similar to what Rakhaldas did in Bengali, Hari Narayan Apte in Marathi and Lakshmi Narasiham in Telugu. After the attainment of freedom, however, the tone changed and with the establishment of the Republic, novelists looked to the past to find the traditions of republican governments. This was really an effort to establish a link between the old order and the new. Rahul Sankrityayan's (1893–1963) *Jaya*

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Yaudheya (Victory to Yaudheyas, 1944), Yashpal's *Divyā* (1954), Chatursen Shastri's *Vaiśālī kī Nagarvadhu* (The Courtesan of Vaishali, 1948–49) and Rangeya Raghav's (Rāṅgeya Rāghava, 1923–63) *Murdoṁ kā Ṭīlā* (The Mound of the Dead, 1949) are some of the significant works of this type.

There is hardly a novel in this stream which aims at interpreting life anew. Authors take greater liberties with the facts of life than the historians. In the historical novels, facts are re-created, with the help of the imagination, to fulfil a definite artistic purpose, keeping in mind the ultimate reader interest. There are, however, some like Rangeya Raghav who have advocated an objective scientific perspective instead of a romantic approach to historical material. In this category are some novels which create the impression or illusion of historical authenticity.

Bhagwaticharan Varma's *Citralekhā* is among the earlier works of historical illusion. Hazari Prasada Dwivedi (1907–79) later on wrote some colourful novels in this vein. *Bāṇa Bhaṭṭa kī Ātma Kathā* (Autobiography of Banabhatta, 1947), his first novel, is a unique attempt at creating historical illusion not only by imaginative sequences but also by a picturesque style. Dwivedi believed in, and advocated, the synthesis of fact and fiction. Even in medieval epics like *Pṛthvī Rāj Rāso* he justified the use of imagination as the writer's licence or privilege. His *Cāru Candralekha* (1963) and *Punarnavā* (1973) are some other novels written in the same style. His works are different from those of all other writers of similar material by virtue of their rich cultural content. His theme in all his works is historical culture rather than history itself. What Chatursen Shastri termed as *itihāsa rasa* (historic-sentiment) is found in abundance in Dwivedi's novels.

A historical novel is in essence a revival of cultural values. Whether history itself can be totally devoid of subjective interpretation or the attitudes and pressures of the ruling class is a debatable point. A historical novelist, without doubt, uses history as a springboard and looks beyond history to realize a universal truth through particular events. He does not re-create history; rather he creates a historical culture, which transports the reader into the golden realms of the past. We feel the impulse not of the individual, but of the race within us; and that is precisely what is important, the extension of the realm of experience by linking history with humanity. Consequently, wherever the writer becomes conscious of historical accuracy (we cannot talk in terms of historical truth as long as we do not have the means to verify it), his creativity tends to diminish. Two novels by Vrindavan Lal Verma, for example, *Jhānsī kī Rāṇī Lakṣmībāī* (Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, 1946) and *Mṛganayanī* offer an interesting comparative study from this point of view. In *Jhānsī kī Rāṇī Lakṣmībāī*, the author has documented all the important historical events of the life of its heroine Maharani Lakshmi Bai. The inspiration of the novel is derived from the desire to refute Parsany's view that the Rani was forced to fight against the British while looking after the administration of Jhansi on behalf of General Rose. The writer has done a lot of research to be able to establish that the Rani was not compelled to fight against the British but did so on her own, in the noble cause of freedom. Since the author is very particular about the authenticity of historical events the approach has become factual at the cost of literary quality. At places the incidents have just been listed. The style accordingly is predominantly documentary and descriptive.

His other novel *Mṛganayanī*, which has been accepted as his best work, also has a historical theme. It is the romantic tale of Raja Mansingh Tomar of Gwalior of the 15th century and his Bheel Rani Mrignaini. The author has not taken any licence with historical facts in this novel either, but whereas *Mṛganayanī* is re-creation of history as literature, *Jhānsī kī Rāṇī* is documentation of history in a literary garb. The plot, structure, characterization, milieu and style has abundant artistic quality in *Mṛganayanī* although it also gives a glimpse of the historical situation of the 15th century. The theme of the novel, as evident from the title, centres round Mrignaini, the principal female character and exposes the beauty, the strength and the spirit of adventure of the tribals with romantic fervour.

The Regional Novel

Running parallel to the historical novel is another significant trend in the Hindi novel, namely the *Āñcalika* (regional) novel. In fact, the regional novel is another dimension of the socio-realistic novel, only that greater attention is paid to the environment than to the story and characters. Writers of such novels have taken an anti-story and anti-hero approach. The author portrays in such minute detail the locale and the life of the particular region in which the novel is set that it becomes as alive as the characters and the events. Very often the language of these novels is laden with local dialects. It has been said correctly that in such novels the main character is the region itself. This is also interpreted as an attempt to underplay the role of the traditional hero in the modern novel and to give importance to the common man. With the common man and his common place life being projected, the emphasis in these novels shifts to the environment, its climate and culture.

Regionalism has many aspects. In some cases it is an escape into an obscure world from the conflicts of modern urban life. *Sāgar, Lahreṁ aur Manuṣya* (The Sea, the Waves and Man, 1956) by Uday Shankar Bhatta (Udaya Śaṅkara Bhaṭṭa, 1898–1965) is an example. In other cases it is inspired by a nostalgia for one's own roots accompanied by a sense of social responsibility. The environment chosen is socially backward and, by and large, undeveloped. The author very often works in a mood of disillusionment or

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disenchantment. His dreams of a free India are rudely shattered because he finds that conditions have only worsened. Thus the social purpose is quite evident in these novels.

The early instances of this trend are found in such books as *Billesur Bakarihā* (Billesur, the Goat-Keeper) by Nirala. Among later authors, Nagarjun, Shiva Prasad Singh (Śiva Prasāda Siṁha, b. 1929) and Rangeya Raghav deserve mention. But the author who is unsurpassed in this field is Phanishwar Nath Renu (Phaṇīśvara Nātha Reṇu, 1921–78). His two novels, *Mailā Āñcal* (The Dirty Region, 1954), after which such novels are called *Āñcalika Upanyāsa* (the regional novel) in Hindi, and *Partī Parikathā* (The Tale of the Wasteland, 1957) are significant portraits of the Purnia district in Bihar. These novels are rich not only in vivid and picturesque descriptions of the regional life but they also register in a powerful manner the impact of the outside world on the region. The tensions, hypocrisies, social and human conflicts and, above all, the disillusionment with the post-Partition political situation in the country are all portrayed most understandingly. The reader of the usual novel finds something unusual here—an extremely lean story, without incidents and with little emphasis on characterization. What emerges is a whole region, with all its sights and sounds including the dialect, which makes difficult reading till one gets used to it. These novels move like a carnival. Life is presented in the raw, with natural colours, rhythm, movement, joys and sorrows, gains and losses. After Premchand, it is only in these regional novels that one finds a retreat towards the backward and undeveloped rural life for its natural, unsophisticated, unaffected flavour. What makes Renu so significant and different from the other novelists of the main stream is the fact that unlike him most of them have looked at the rural life with an urban eye and tried to fit in rural problems in urban frames. That is why they have not been able to reach the soul of rural life. *Mailā Āñcal* is the story of the constantly changing life of a village of Mithila. The Second World War and the incidents that followed, particularly the attainment of freedom, stirred the whole country deeply. Innumerable facets of life undiscovered and hitherto unknown were uncovered and exposed in the process. This change has been treated superficially in a number of Hindi novels but *Mailā Āñcal* portrays the deep commotion and upheaval that occurred in the village life, with a difference. The life of a small village, Meriganj, in the Purnia district of Bihar, keeps moving like thousands of other villages of northern India amidst its splendid, natural surroundings. It is not that the World War or the nationwide Freedom Movement did not create a stir in the life of this region, but the contact with modern life occurs in the real sense only when Doctor Prashant comes to the village to start a hospital, to be able to undertake research relating to malaria. All of a sudden as if a curtain is raised from innumerable layers of the social, political, psychological and religious life of the village, the apparent lethargy, peacefulness or rather passivity suddenly disappears. The life of the village-folk starts moving and many layers, aspects and levels depicted from a number of points of view are exposed, brought to the surface as in a film—a whole in many variations, very close and yet very distant. To say that the writer is acquainted with rural life very intimately, will not be enough. What is even more important than this acquaintance is that approach, that point of view which reorganizes all the social relations in a new order. What makes it a successful piece of art is the spontaneous and genuine feeling for the subject, reproduced with utmost aesthetic restraint and caution. Most of the other less significant writers who have looked to rural subjects for their works have done so more with a sense of duty rather than as an aesthetic urge or compulsion. The writer of *Mailā Āñcal* does not seem to be inspired either by any dogma or ideology or even political programmes to be carried out through his writings. His concern is basically human which takes root from his feeling for humanity. What evoked a spontaneous controversy about the novel was the regional vocabulary and expressions, evenly spread, which obstructs the reader and mars the effect on the whole.

The latest novel of this type is *Zindagīnāmā* (The Saga of Life, 1979) by Krishna Sobti (Kṛṣṇa Sobtī). This significant work portrays the pre-Partition Punjab, particularly the region on the banks of the river Chenab. The author's insistence on retaining the dialect of the region and the period in its natural form sometimes obstructs the smooth movement of the story from the reader's point of view, because this has been done not with a mere sprinkling of dialectal usages here and there but through a sustained effort to capture the tone and rhythm of the speech of the region to the extent that even some of the Prakrit forms have been retained. This difficulty was experienced at first in the case of Renu's novels as well, but he is easier to read as the story moves on. This is because he has chosen contemporary themes whereas Sobti deals with a half-century old life pattern of a particular geographical area. Renu's novels also contain a lean but clear outline of plot, unlike *Zindagīnāmā* which is a kind of challenge to the traditional plot structure of the novel. As the title suggests, in *Zindagīnāmā* there emerges a life pattern in its totality. The canvas is broad and deep. There is no story here, but a mass of fables and anecdotes; there are no characters in particular, but the life of an entire region of people, who have their very own behaviour patterns, values and beliefs. In fact it is a huge backdrop, a 'Zinda-Rookh' for the next volume, *Inqalāb-Zindābād* (Long Live the Revolution).

The Social Novel Again

The dominant trend in the post-Independence era was the

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social novel, which reappeared with some difference, of course. In Premchand's novels, social themes were presented with emphasis on contemporary problems of rural as well as urban India, some of them resulting from the conflict of the two. Later novelists dealt with the individual, his psyche, his behaviour, his actions and reactions to the environment around. The emphasis shifted from objective portrayals to the more subtle undercurrents of human relationships. World Wars, the Partition and its aftermath all raised several questions about traditional values, concepts of morality and the whole ethical structure—even about the very meaning of human existence. All these questions assumed different forms in the writings of different novelists. In the works of a conformist like Amrit Lal Nagar (b. 1916) human relationships against the background of changing social situations are portrayed on a comparatively broad canvas. Among his famous works are *Būnd aur Samudra* (The Drop and the Sea, 1956) and *Amṛt aur Viṣ* (Nectar and Poison). He later reconstructed the biography of the saint-poet Tulasidas on the basis of scattered literary and historical references, visualizing the saint-poet's life as the struggle of a creative writer against the forces of established order.

Quite a few novels have been inspired by one of the most important political events of this century—Partition. Yashpal re-created the massive upheaval with panoramic vision on a very broad canvas in his famous novel, *Jhūṭhā Sac* (The False Truth, 1960)—a work of epic dimensions. Yashpal's novel, which tends to lean on documentation, has a positive Marxist bias in several places; but that does not mean that it lacks artistic execution. There is a well-conceived structural pattern to it. The story begins with the disintegration of a joint family and goes on to describe the disintegration of a whole nation. The first volume is the saga of the uprooting of a whole city, Lahore, the cultural centre of the Punjab. The second volume deals with the implications of the rehabilitation of these uprooted people in another city and another culture, Delhi. There is a definite pattern in the development of plot-incidents, but the structure is extremely complicated and multidimensional. The strength and peculiarity of this novel lies in its characterization, in the immense strength displayed by the characters in fighting the adverse conditions in which they are placed. One political disaster—the Partition—played havoc with their lives. It is true that they do not always win against the calamities of life but it is equally true that they do not give in easily either. They have a deep attachment—a fascination for life, that gives them strength to keep alive in moments of utter despair. These are numerous biographies—long and short. To weave this mass of biographies with all kinds of incidents—ordinary and extraordinary, with a skill where their peculiar character traits are neither diffused nor lost, is not a mean achievement. It has however been said that the characters in the novel betray a very practical and realistic approach to life. Beyond immediate social, economic or family problems they do not look to those questions which are much more complex and related to the basic question of the very being, the existence of human life, human destiny and the apprehensions facing it. It is a realistic novel predominantly based on the socio-political situation of a particular period. The expression is true to the content, the novelist has observed life with deep understanding and expressed it faithfully. One may not come across many flights of imagination or colourful descriptions. But that is Yashpal's style.

Nearly two decades later Bhishm Sahni (Bhīṣma Sāhni, b. 1915) adopted the same socio-political upheaval as the theme of his novel *Tamas* (Darkness, 1973), but on a smaller scale. What is, however, noteworthy about these novels is that they are not mere narrations of a significant event, a story retold, but an analytical study of human behaviour and ethical patterns.

There are several novels inspired obliquely or, rather, in a subtler way, by subsequent socio-political developments. Rajendra Yadav's *Ukhaḍe hue Log* (The Uprooted People, 1956) portrays political opportunism in the contemporary, crumbling social structure. Shri Lal Shukla (Śri Lāla Śukla, b. 1925) in *Rāg Darbārī* (1968) and Rahi Masoom Raza (b. 1927) in *Ādhā Gāṁv* (Partitioned Village, 1966) have presented with subtle irony and humour post-Independence life in a particular region. Giriraj Kishore (b. 1936), in his long novel, *Jugalbandī* (The Duet, 1973), has for its theme the demolishing of the feudal structure and the consequent conflict between generations.

Other Writings

A number of other novels have been written on the various social aspects of life today, but the general emphasis, as mentioned earlier, has shifted from social to human relationships. To the novelist of this period, the world of the novel is essentially a world of experience. And since there is always a limit to an individual's range of experience, the canvas of these novels tends to be quite limited—both to the advantage and disadvantage of the author. The reality projected is the outcome of direct experience and is, naturally, very convincing for that reason. But at the same time neither a broad view of life nor a vision beyond the day-to-day scene is presented. The most common themes of these novels is the man-woman relationship or family relationship in the new social order. Whenever these authors go beyond the relationship between two individuals and depict family crises or social conflicts, they invariably deal with such general problems as tradition versus modernity, the generation gap, disintegration of the family unit, alienation of modern man, complexities of human behaviour in big cities, etc. Quite a few novelists have made a mark with this line of writing. Apart from Mohan Rakesh, Kamleswar and

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Rajendra Yadav, some senior writers such as Upendranath Ashk (Upendranātha Aśka, b. 1910), Yashpal and Nagarjun also have written effectively on these themes.

Among women writers, Krishna Sobti, Mannu Bhandari (b. 1931) and Usha Priyamvada (b. 1931) deserve special mention. Sobti is noted for her boldness of approach and outspoken style. She has concentrated on man-woman relationships, but the treatment this theme receives from her shows a strong conviction and self-confidence which is all her own. Mannu Bhandari's novel *Āpkā Baṇṭī* (Your 'Bunty', 1971) has been appreciated because of the wider appeal of the problem she has tackled—the problem of children of divorced parents. With this problem she adds a third dimension to the usual triangle of man-woman relationships. In her recent political novel *Mahābhoja* (The Death Feast, 1979) she has taken up another burning question of the day: the exploitation of tragic human conditions by unscrupulous politicians. It is a daring exercise in the portrayal of some memorable characters. Usha Priyamvada is known for sensitively depicting the plight of modern women in a variety of situations. Her novelettes, *Pacpan Khambhe: Lāl Dīvāreṁ* (Fifty-five Pillars: Red Walls,) and *Rukogī Nahīṁ Rādhikā* (Won't You Stay Back Radhika ?, 1967) are good examples of her work.

Nirmal Verma (b. 1929) is a novelist with a different aesthetic temper. His novelettes have very little by way of incidents or characters. The stories are very sketchy, more often woven round just a moment, captured in all its details and tense emotion. He has often been accused of adopting a romantic attitude and lyrical style. What gives an impression of a romantic approach in lyrical vein is the delicate portrayal of particular moments through a sensitive verbal medium. Nirmal Verma is very conscious of the nuances of his verbal medium and exploits them to the maximum. But his extended stories lack the vigour and intensity of experience and fail because of the absence of a familiar world in them. His characters are few and often unusual. The situations he creates are also rather uncommon, lacking social or individual relationships which cause concern. The novelettes of Nirmal Verma—*Ve Din* (Those Days, 1964), *Lāl Ṭīn kī Chāt* (The Red Tin Roof, 1974) and *Ek Citḍā Sukh* (Happiness—a Rag, 1979) are all studies of rather unimportant situations which assume importance only through detail. Rarely do they succeed in involving the reader, by way of experience, emotion or commitment. But they do demonstrate the author's powers of observation, for he re-creates minute details of human behaviour with a rare mastery of language.

The most significant shortcoming in the field of the contemporary Hindi novel is the lack of size, a tendency discernible in the realm of poetry as well. Just as there was a huge void in the domain of epics after *Kāmāyanī*, so too there is a void in the world of prose fiction today. Generally the novels have been shorter works. There has been no epic novel worth the name. Writers who have consciously tried to strike a balance between content and form have written a number of significant novels. But where the meagre content of a novel has been over-stretched it has resulted in artistic failure. *Murdāghar* (The Mortuary, 1974) by Jagdamba Prasad Dikshit (b. 1935) is a notable example of the first category. It deals with the problem of prostitution in the jhuggis of Bombay. On the other hand, *Yātrāyeṁ* (Travels, 1971) by Giriraj Kishore is an example of total artistic failure. Here the very personal problems of the post-marital maladjustment of a couple on their honeymoon has been expanded into a small novel by filling the gaps in the scanty theme with superfluous descriptions.

Though contemporary Hindi literature today lacks an epic novel, it abounds in novels written by many young writers of promise. Besides those who have already been discussed, Hrdayeśa (b. 1930), Sānī (b. 1933), Yogeś Gupta (b. 1931), Govind Misra (b. 1939), and Krishna Baldev Vaid (b. 1927), among others, ensure the future of the genre —both in quantity and quality.

Form of the Novel

As regards the form of the Hindi novel, it undoubtedly abounds in variety achieved with competence. In the beginning one can see traces of folk-style in the commonly adopted prose narrative. It has all the ingredients of a 'story told' as seen from the descriptions, the dialogue and over and above, a tendency to address. Gradually it matured into the form of a story written or a story read, i.e. a prose narrative. Till the time of Premchand the majority of Hindi novels were written in the descriptive-narrative style. The language was also nearer to the spoken Hindi of the middle-class people. With the coming in of Jainendra, the tendency to experiment both in expression and structure started. In a number of works, the common third person narration was substituted with a first person address.

Some novels were written in the form of a diary or autobiography—related, or documented. Due to the tendency to explore the psychology of the characters, the style also became analytical, and the expression sophisticated and intellectual. Because of the emphasis on the individual, rather than on society and humanity, the canvas also was limited. The structure was often very intricate and complex. It was chiefly Jainendra and Ajneya who experimented with this form.

The stream of historical and regional novels, however, because of the context and approach, preferred the narrative form, but with a difference. They abound in beautiful descriptions. The emphasis shifted from incidents to the environment. Some of the most telling landscapes, people, their customs and festivals, have been painted in words in these novels. The novelists give an observant account through their picturesque descriptions. The insistence to

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be true to life has lured them to the use of spoken dialects of the particular regions. Though this contributes to authenticity and also has its own rugged and unsophisticated charm, it obstructs easy reading.

In contrast some novelists have given proof of extremely sensitive, almost poetic, use of literary language. The themes of these novelettes belong to a very narrow circle where characters are caught up in extraordinary situations. Expression is also peculiarly suited to this particular style. The writer handles his art with considerable sensitivity exploiting all the nuances of the word in perfect agreement with the subtle and tense emotion.

The social-descriptive novel of the post-Premchand period is also basically different from the novel of Premchand's period. Since the writer of this period is socially very much more alert and also disillusioned by the post-Independence political events it has affected his style too. The dramatic element has become inevitable for him because his characters are condemned to live in the throes of social inequality and injustice. Their fight is against the social order and for a quest of values. Hence the events are stretched in a dramatic structure and satire and irony account for obliqueness of style. The incidents are often used for other motives. The importance of well-knit plots with the story element has diminished considerably. Consequently for some time some novelists propagated and tried to nurture an anti-story and anti-hero attitude. The contemporary Hindi novel is rich from the point of view of form. It has successfully experimented with various styles and can offer an interesting and varied fare for any exclusive study of its form.

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Kannada

L. S. SESHAGIRI RAO

'Kādambari'

The novel is *Kādambari* in Kannada. The word was familiar to the Kannada reader because of Banabhatta's *Kādambari* in Sanskrit. This work had been rendered into Kannada by Nagavarma (Nāgavarma) in the 10th century, and in more recent times by Thuramari (Gaṅgādhara Maḍivālēśvara, Turamari, 1827–77) and G. Y. Krishnacharya (Kṛṣṇācārya). The term Kādambari seems to have been used as the equivalent of the term 'novel' in North Karnataka in the early 1890s. B. Venkatacharya (Veṅkaṭācārya, 1845–1914), whose translations of Bengali novels played an important role in the early history of the Kannada novel, used the word 'novel'. In 1891, the Karnataka Vidyavardhaka Sangha of Dharwar announced a prize of thirty rupees to be awarded to the best 'Kādambari'. Galaganatha (Gaḷaganātha, 1869–1942) who translated a number of Marathi novels, referred to his works in the 1890s as 'novels'. Gradually the term found acceptance all over Karnataka and is firmly established today.

The Preparation

The Beginnings. Critics agree that M. S. Puttanna's (Puṭṭaṇṇa, 1854–1930) *Māḍiḍḍuṇṇō Mahārāya* (1915) is the first Kannada work that, by literary standards, merits the designation of a novel. Probably the first work which merits mention is Yadava's *Kalāvati* (1815). Yadava was for some time in the court of Mummadai Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (Kṛṣṇarāja Odeyar, 1794–1868), the ruler of Mysore. It is the story of a maid who refuses to surrender herself to her future husband before their marriage. The displeased youth swears he will not consummate the marriage but she vows to chasten him through their son. This is a romance rather

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than a novel. Krishnaraja Wodeyar himself wrote *Saugandhika Pariṇaya* (1821)—a work exceeding a thousand pages. Lord Indra is the hero of the work; he is born human as a result of a curse and is known as Sougandharaja. Kempunarayana's *Mudrāmañjūṣa* (The Sealed Casket, 1823) has sometimes been described as anticipating the novel. It is the story of the victory of Chandragupta Maurya, guided by the wily Chanakya, over his cousins, the powerful Navanandanas of Maghada. It is based on Vishakadatta's Sanskrit play, *Mudrarākṣasa*. The narration is influenced by Banabhatta's *Kādambari*. There are lengthy descriptions, and the atmosphere is not always that of the Magadha Court of the 4th century B.C. There is also a heavy sprinkling of Sanskrit words. But what is remarkable is that it is so little influenced by mythology. *Sṛṅgāra* has no place in it. It is concerned with the fortunes of a kingdom. The not inconsiderable proportion of short sentences and the clear diction are a preparation for a prose that can meet the demands of the novel.

Translations and Original Works. In the following decades translations and adaptations of English works began to appear. Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* appeared with the title *Yātrikana Sancāra* (1842). Other works to be translated were Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Thomas Day's *Sandford and Merton*.

In the meantime, the first translation from an Indian language appeared in 1869, with the publication of the translation of Baba Padamanji's *Yamuna Paryaṭana* from Marathi. This novel presented a picture of the sufferings of a Hindu widow. This may be considered as the first social novel in Kannada.

The year 1885 was an important one in the history of the Kannada novel. B. Venkatacharya published the translation of Bankim Chandra's *Durgēśanandini*. This was his first translation and it attracted a large number of readers, particularly in old Mysore. In his English preface to the work Venkatacharya made it clear that in his view a novel is to hold the mirror up to the motives and ways of the individual in society and thus shape social conduct. He brought out a series of translations of Bankim's novels and created a climate in which this form could thrive.

The first independent historical novel was the work of Lakshmana Rao Gadagkar. His *Sūryakānta* appeared in 1892. The action of the novel is placed in the 18th century. It is a story about a poor family, and there is little by way of the reconstruction of the ways and values of a bygone age.

The year 1895 proved fruitful. Puttanna's translation of *Sandford and Merton* appeared that year. The first two translations of Telugu novels, Veereshalingam's *Vivēka Candrike* by Somanathia and Rentala Venkatasubba Rao's *Kēsari Vilāsa* (translated by the author), appeared the same year. The Kesari of the title is a young lady who believes in equality of women with men, and freedom. Next year, Gubbi Murigaradhya (who, it is interesting to remember, was a student at the time), wrote his *Śṛṅgāracāturyōllāsini*. It is a romance packed with incidents, rhetorical in style, which seeks both to entertain and instruct.

Next year, M. Venkatakrishnaiah (Veṅkaṭakṛṣṇayya, 1844–1934), the Grand Old Man of Mysore and a revered journalist, gave Kannada its first detective novel, *Cōragrahaṇa Tantra* (The Art of Catching Thieves, 1897). The object of the novel is to show that crime never pays.

1899, again a memorable year, saw the publication of the first independent social novel in Kannada—Gulavadi Venkata Rao's (Guḷavāḍi Veṅkaṭa Rāv, 1844–1913) *Indirā Bai*. The subtitle *Saddharma Vijayavu* (The Victory of Righteousness) clearly indicates its didactic purpose. But its object is not to uphold traditional values. It exposes the cruelty underlying traditional customs and beliefs and the hypocrisy which permeates religious institutions. The same year brought the first translation from Malayalam, Joseph Mūḷiyil's *Sukumāri* (1897).

By about 1900 social conditions were more favourable to the development of the novel. This literary form needs a wide circle of readers with the leisure and the desire to read by themselves, and industrial and transport facilities to produce and distribute large numbers of copies of a single work. Madras University was founded in 1857. Education spread, and the restoration of Mysore state to the royal family in 1881 gave a fillip to the study of Kannada in the state. The first printing press in Kannada came into existence in the 1850s. The first train in India was on the rails in 1853. Transport and communication improved steadily. A middle class with some leisure and with an inclination to read emerged slowly. The revival of interest in Kalidasa, the staging of the adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare and the study of English literature from Chaucer to Dickens prompted interest in characterization.

The Kannada novel owes much to Venkatacharya and V. T. K. Galaganatha. The former translated novels from Bengali—mostly those of Bankim Chandra—and the latter from Marathi. Both wrote independent novels too. Venkatacharya's style is heavily Sanskritized; Galaganatha's style is rather flat. But they created an interest in the novel. The novels translated by both were packed with incidents; some of them were historical romances rather than historical novels. They were often meant to arouse patriotic fervour. So they readily found a wide circle of readers.

The first novel to be based on the history of Karnataka, *Kumudini*, appeared in 1913.

Maḍiḍduṇṇo Mahārāya. M. S. Puttanna's (1854–1930) *Maḍiḍduṇṇo Mahārāya* (As You Sow, So You Reap) appeared in 1915. This is the first independent novel worth the name, despite the author's avowed didactic purpose. It is the first novel with a genuine interest in human nature

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There is preaching, but it is placed in a human context. The novel is about the fortunes of two generations of a virtuous family. It idealizes some of the characters and employs the supernatural to achieve poetic justice. But the rendering of rural life is remarkably vivid and balanced. When this is contrasted with the novels which had appeared till then it is clear that this novel had shed the burden of excessive plot. In fact, very little happens in ten chapters. But the entire community comes to life. It was fortunate that so early in the history of the Kannada novel there appeared a novelist who took the medium seriously and had a lively awareness of the variety of human nature. Puttanna's language is incisive and lively, and close to that of everyday life.

Sivaram Karanth

The novel had to wait for nearly two decades for any significant advance. But its luck held, for in 1928 appeared *Dēvadūtaru* (The Divine Messengers); and with this novel Sivaram Karanth (Śivarāma Kārant, b. 1902) entered the realm of the Kannada novel. (Karanth received the Jnanpith Award for 1975 for his novel, *Mūkajjiya Kanasugaḷu*.) Straightway the novel shed its excessive reliance on plot and didacticism. Karanth's first novel was a satire. His next novel was *Cōmana Duḍi* (Choma's Drum, 1933). This is the story of an untouchable, Choma, whose only aspiration is to be able to call at least a small bit of land his own and till it. It is the grim story of the exploitation of Choma and his children by one and all; the almost matter-of-fact and superbly restrained narration gives it deep power. In *Maraḷi Maṇṇige* (Back to the Soil, 1942) Karanth brought nature into Kannada fiction. He narrates here the story of three generations, their fight for survival, and the changing relations between man and nature. The first generation sees nature mainly as an antagonist who can and should be exploited. The second generation has a more complex attitude. It responds to the loveliness of nature but seeing a challenge in her seeks to assert its own strength. By the time the third generation begins its struggle, the old society has disintegrated; this generation is the victim of the 'sick hurry and the divided aims' of a new set-up. This novel was a revelation of the potentialities of the form and a step beyond the portrayal of the significance of individual life and the probing of the life of the community, towards the exploration of the relation of man with the universe.

Up to about 1960 Karanth's novels were mainly concerned with the question of the source of inner strength in man and woman. Some of his unforgettable characters are old women who have been apparently overwhelmed by the onslaughts of life and have nothing to sustain them—yet survive and even offer material support and strength of will to others. They can face life and endure even what seems beyond the endurance of mortals because they have faith in something, and believe that life has meaning; even when the husband or the son or someone who was the very centre of their lives deceives or deserts, not for a moment does it occur to them that they can end all their problems by quitting the arena of life. Karanth himself is an agnostic, but he can respect—and depict movingly—genuine faith in God which sustains one when mountains seem to tumble. And he can lay bare the inner weakness which reduces life to an empty show. It is remarkable how consistently from his early novels Karanth curbs theatricality and sentimentality. About 1960 one sees a change in Karanth's novels. *Aḷida Mēle* (After Extinction, 1960) marks the change. He is now more concerned with the growth of personality, the very process of change and development, over a stretch of decades. He seeks to depict the play of external forces and society on the psyche of an individual. Yashwantha Rao, the hero of *Aḷida Mele*, is dead by the time the action begins. The narrator who has known him (though not intimately) and has developed respect for him, finds that he has been made the executor of his will, and has to delve into his past. The journey into the past is also a journey into the consciousness of Yashwantha Rao and the novel traces the evolution of his personality. Gradually we become conscious of the impact of this journey on the personality of the narrator himself. Karanth uses symbols here as he had done never before. As the novelist's interest in the forces that shape character deepens, his work seeks a wider and still wider compass until in *Mūkajjiya Kanasugaḷu* (The Visions of Mukajji, 1968) it spans the history of mankind over thousands of years and explores this history through the visions of an old woman in an obscure village—truly an incredible medium for the task. If *Aḷida Mēle* analyses the growth of the individual psyche *Mūkajjiya Kanasugaḷu* traces the growth of society, its beliefs, customs and institutions, over centuries. The analysis is made by an illiterate but wise and compassionate old woman. Here Karanth seems to stretch the medium to its breaking point.

A Karanth novel is remarkable for the range and wealth of experience which go into it. There is always a scale of values which is independent of tradition which evolves in the work and is always related to human nature and the realities of life. He is a realist in that he refuses to idealize or romanticize human nature. There is compassion in his vision of human life but it is so blended with reflection and assessment that it never grows maudlin or sentimental. The range and variety of his technique from *Beṭṭada Jīva* (The Spirit of the Mountains, 1943) to *Mūjanma* (Three Births, 1971) have not been appreciated because they are unostentatious and because, when the technique succeeds, as in *Beṭṭada Jīva*, it seems inevitable. *Beṭṭada Jīva* was probably the first Kannada novel to use the first person narrative.

Karanth belongs to the epoch in modern Kannada lite-

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rature which is usually referred to as the *Navōdaya* age (Navōdaya—the Renaissance). The publication of a collection of Professor B. M. Srikantayya's translations of English poems, *English Gitagaḷu* (1921), is regarded as ushering in this era. The literature of this era was humanistic, democratic and secular. Karanth belongs to this age in his faith in the meaningfulness of life, in his secular outlook, in his interest in the life of the common man and the humbler sections of society, and in his innovative temperament. He is also of this age in his use of the language of everyday life. But he does not glorify, as the majority of the writers of the age do, Indian culture and the vision of the ancients. He also seems to have escaped completely the influence of English writers—an influence so marked in the compositions of many writers of the age. Karanth belonged to the *Navōdaya* age but transcended it.

The Navōdaya Age

The spirit of the new age manifested itself most fruitfully in poetry and fiction. This was the age in which new literary forms were transplanted in the Kannada soil. The novel was one of these. Scott and Dickens (works like *Hard Times* attracted few readers, it was the Dickens of *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* who was most popular) were the novelists most read. But more immediate and powerful was the impact of the novels of Bankim and Sarat Chandra Chatterji. This was also the period of the intensification of the struggle for freedom. With the advent of Gandhiji on the national scene the need for social reformation received stress. It is intriguing that the struggle for freedom did not figure in the Kannada novel until 1946, when Gorur Ramaswamy Iyengar in his *Hēmavati*, V. M. Inamdar in his *Murā Batte* and T. R. Subba Rao in his *Rakta Tarpaṇa* (Blood Offering, 1946) essayed this theme. It must be remembered that the number of creative writers was small and that most of them sought to express themselves in different media. (Karanth is also a dramatist, a short-story writer and an essayist. He has also written an autobiography. Masti Venkatesha Iyengar is a short-story writer, a novelist, a dramatist, a poet and a critic.)

They were naturally open to several influences. The influence of the Romantic writers was evidenced by the Kannada writer's interest in simple and humble life and the recognition of the worth and dignity of man as man. The desire for social reformation and the admiration for simple life came from Gandhiji. Faith in the essential purposefulness of life and the need for detachment were the gifts of ancient Indian writers and philosophers. The influence of poets like Wordsworth and Milton is also discernible in the literature of this period. The sense of the purposefulness of life was intensified by the new vistas of service thrown open by the teachings and examples of men like Swami Vivekananda, Gandhiji, Tilak and C. F. Andrews. Betageri Krishna Sharma's (Beṭagēri Kṛṣṇaśarma, 1900–82) *Sudarśana* (1933) was probably the first social novel which glorified simple living and high thinking and the other ideals preached by Gandhiji.

The Period 1928–40. It is interesting to note that although by 1940 barely fifty novels had come out, all the important novelists of the *Navōdaya* age had already made their mark. More important still, the Kannada novel exhibited a richness and variety amazing in a literary form barely a dozen years old (for the period 1915–28, was practically barren). 1928 saw the publication of Masti Venkatesha Iyengar's (Masti Veṅkaṭēśa Ayyaṅgār, b. 1891) *Subbaṇṇa* (1928), which belongs to a form which has now come to be called 'short fiction'. It is a remarkable narrative of inner fruition. The same year (1928) Karanth published his *Devadūtaru* and, five years later, *Cōmana Duḍi*. Devudu Narasimha Sastry's (Dēvudu Narasiṁha Śāstrī, 1896–1962) *Antaraṅga* (The World Within, 1931) was the first psychological novel; his *Mayūra* (1928) was the first historical novel with a sense of form. The note of social protest was sounded in A. N. Krishna Rao's (Kṛṣṇa Rāv; popularly known as Ā. Nā. Kṛṣṇa Rāv, or Ā. Nā. Kru, 1908–71) *Jīvana Yātre* (Life's Pilgrimage, 1934). His *Udayarāga* (The Tune of Dawn, 1934) was the first novel to depict the life of an artist. Adya Rangacharya's (Ādya Raṅgācārya, b. 1904), *Viśvāmitrana Sṛṣṭi* is an amazing debut. As early as in 1934 Rangacharya treated the subject of the outsider. Narayana, a young man, is disillusioned with his education and culture; he becomes a rebel, is influenced by Gandhian teachings, and seeks to reform society but discovers that he has just been drifting. Unlike many novelists of the age, Rangacharya is able to maintain an attitude of detachment. Idealism and the sordid realities of life clash and the youth wanders, seeking peace, continuing to drift. This was probably the first Kannada novel which put the reader at the centre of a consciousness.

K. V. Puttappa. K. V. Puttappa's (Kuvempu is pseud. of Puṭṭappa, b. 1904) *Kānūru Subbamma Heggaḍiti*, a novel of epic proportions, appeared in 1938. The 'malnad' (the hilly regions with plenty of rain) comes to life in these pages as never before. The life of man and the life of nature are splendidly interwoven, and the beast in man often keeps company with the beast in the world outside. Sunrise and sunset, toil and sport, spring, summer and the rainy season—all are concretely rendered to create a world in which hunger, the desire for sex, friendship and love struggle with forces of caste, feudalism, money and superstition. The novelist has tried to present a vision of the evolution of a refined and noble consciousness, but there is great difference of opinion among critics about the success of this attempt.

What is noteworthy is that by 1940 the important trends

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of *Navōdaya* fiction were clear and the third decade of the century was rich both in fruitful experimentation and significant achievement.

More Navōdaya Novels

The next decade fulfilled the promise of the thirties. A number of good novels appeared (great novels inevitably were few) and these sustained the new interest in fiction which the thirties had created. These novels were mostly concerned with the life of the middle class (though there were exceptions like M. V. Seetharamiah's *Mādana Magaḷu*; Daughter of Mada). They were mostly concerned with the joys and sorrows and the ties and problems of domestic life. They portrayed the life of the middle class in town and city. The writers had a liberal rather than a radical outlook. They believed in the essential goodness of the human heart and the possibility of social change through reason and persuasion. These novels were at times sentimental. They tended to give pictures of mellowness without tracing the process of mellowing, to idealize human nature and to ignore the impress of the social environment on the individual consciousness. But with all these limitations the *Navōdaya* age made of the novel something very much more than a mere means of entertainment. It established a meaningful relationship between the novelist and the community, though perhaps there was something romantic about the picture of the novelist as the conscience and the voice of the community. It stressed the possibilities of growth in human nature and promoted a liberal outlook in social relations and assessment of custom and tradition. There was little talk about technique, but an age which produced *Maraḷi Maṇṇige*, *Beṭṭada Jīva*, *Antaraṅga*, *Mayūra*, *Viśvāmitrana Sṛṣṭi*, *Cakradriṣṭi*, *Eradu Dhruva* and *Kānūru Subbamma Heggaḍithi* was certainly not pitiably naive and thoughtless about technique.

Karanth and Puttappa have already been mentioned. We may now turn to some more important writers of the age. It is necessary to stress that quite a number of these novelists continued to write and enjoy considerable popularity even after the revolt by the *Pragatiśīlas* (the Progressives). The *Navōdaya* age was not superseded, and because of its blend of realism and idealism and its affirmation of the significance of life as well as its portrayal of the joy of simple human relations it will probably never be superseded.

Devudu Narasimha Sastry. Devudu Narasimha Sastry, who has already been mentioned as the author of the first psychological novel in Kannada (*Antaraṅga*), was a unique writer. He was a titan of a scholar, particularly in Vedanta. He belonged to the *Navōdaya* age by his faith in the nobility of man and the meaningfulness of life, as well as by his reverence for the ideals of this ancient land. But he was a gifted man. Scholarship, intellect and imagination blend in his three novels—*Mahābrāhmaṇa* (1952), *Mahākṣatriya* (1960) and *Mahādarśana* (The Sublime Vision, 1963). The hero of the first novel is Viswamitra, of the second Nahusha and of the last Yagnavalkya. In these novels Devudu does what no other novelist in Kannada has done —and what probably very few novelists in India have done; he re-creates the world of the devas, the asuras and the great rishis and sages of yore with an astounding control over the minutest details of custom, language, values and ideals. Details of garment, gesture and courtesies are as firmly controlled as the idiom, the values and trends of the dialogues. In these realms of gods and goddesses, Devudu asserts the greatness of man. In *Mahākṣatriya*, for example, the gods beg Nahusha to ascend the throne of Heaven, because Devendra is under a curse and in hiding. In the familiar legend Nahusha covets Sachidevi, the wife of Devendra and his insolence provokes Sage Agasthya to curse him and he hurtles down to his doom. In Devudu's novel Nahusha is modest, gracious and wise. There is one magnificent scene in which the very gods, Agni, Vāyu and others are thrilled at the superb assurance and clarity of purpose with which he exercises the powers of the Lord of Heaven, and they contrast him with the master they had served who is now in hiding and whom this magnificent mortal is going to save. Nahusha transcends all desire; and with splendid detachment he invites expulsion from Heaven. Devudu's profound knowledge of the ancient works of India is cast into a creative mould by his imagination, and the creation is hard to match.

Adya Rangacharya. Adya Rangacharya's achievements as a novelist have been eclipsed by his contribution as a dramatist, or else he should have ranked among the foremost of our novelists. His *Viśvāmitrana Sṛṣṭi* has been mentioned already. He seeks to probe the intricate workings of the human mind. He has no 'heroes'. His *Prakṛti* (1954) and *Puruṣa*—the two works really form one novel—probe the play of instincts in a changing society. In the first novel the family of Savakar Raghunatharao in the village of Bittur (the word means 'the deserted town') is at the centre. The old society is disintegrating. New social ideas and economic forces lead to the breaking up of the accepted hierarchies. In the second novel Ranganna, of the Savakar's family, has to serve as a clerk under a Harijan. The two novels together offer a vision of individuals caught up in the swirl of social forces and of individual desire, inherited instinct and social change, all operating simultaneously. Rangacharya is one of the few writers of the *Navōdaya* age to recognize the pressure of the environment on the attitudes and values of the individual.

Two Younger Writers. Among the younger generation of novelists were talented writers like Mirji Anna Rao (Mirji

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Aṇṇā Rāv, 1918–75) and Vyasaraya Ballala (Vyāsarāya Ballāja, b. 1923). Anna Rao's first novel, *Nisarga* (Nature), depicted the life in a part of Karnataka with sensitivity. The novel is also memorable for its use of dialect. Vyasaraya Ballala is almost alone in his concern for the men and women who have to struggle to survive in the suffocating atmosphere of the dehumanized cities. Their struggle and defeat are narrated with tenderness, sympathy and restraint. His *Hēmanta Gāna* (The Song of Winter, 1954) tells the tragic story of an idealistic youth fighting for both the workers and the freedom of the press in Bombay. The ruthless and stifling system against which he has to carry on his fight becomes more and more menacing. Woven into this struggle is the deeply moving story of the youth, his devoted wife and the woman who has won his heart.

The Pragatiśīla Epoch

A. N. Krishna Rao (1908–71). With his first three novels A. N. Krishna Rao won immense popularity. *Jīvana Yātre* has already been mentioned. In his first novel he trod what had been more or less forbidden ground—the problem of sex and morality. In later novels he returned to this theme, but in the novels immediately following *Jīvana Yātre* he turned to the lives of artists. *Sandhyārāga* (1938) was his third novel ('sandhya' is the evening, 'raga' suggests both tune and passion). He wrote more than a hundred novels, but this is regarded by most critics as his best novel. The hero is a musician. He is the prototype of the romantic conception of the artist—totally unworldly, tender, and loving solitude. This hero, Lakshmana, has an elder brother, Ramachandra, who is self-centred and callous. The novel traces the career of Lakshmana who steps from peak to peak, while Ramachandra spreads misery all round. At a public performance Lakshmana soars to new and dizzying heights, and as he reaches the conclusion of a glorious song he falls down dead.

In the mid-forties, A. N. Krishna Rao raised a banner of revolt. At this time there was an upsurge all over India and a new school of writers demanded that the writer should develop a social conscience and become the instrument of social revolution. In Karnataka the movement found a powerful leader in Krishna Rao. He dismissed the greater part of the literature of the earlier period as the creation of aesthetes, dilettantes and the well-fed. He called upon writers to expose cruelty and injustice. *Nagna Satya* (The Naked Truth, 1958) is the title of one of his well-known novels. Inevitably there was a good deal of rhetoric in the utterances of this school. Krishna Rao wrote scores of novels according to the tenets of the *Pragatiśīla* school, and became the rallying point for several young men brimming over with fervour and confidence. But unfortunately Krishna Rao's own novels were disappointing. It was not that there was anything inherently wrong with the principles which inspired him but that his revolutionary ideas were put forth in the novels in debates and were condensed into slogans, but were unable to provide the works with backbone. But he did inaugurate the *Pragatiśīla* Movement.

Some Pragatiśīla Writers. The movement attracted quite a number of young writers, and some of them like T. R. Subba Rao (Tā. Rā. Subba Rāu, b. 1920), Basavaraja Kattimani (Basavarāja Kaṭṭīmani, b. 1919), Niranjana (Nirañjana, b. 1923) and Subramanyaraj Urs (Subramaṇyarāj Ars—'Caduraṅga', b. 1916) proved to be talented. Quite a stream of progressive fiction flowed from their pens, and novels like *Jvālāmukhiya Mēle* (On the Volcano, 1951), *Puruṣāvatāra* (1951), *Muñjāviniṇda Muñjāvu* (From Morning to Morning, 1950) and *Cirasmaraṇe* (Eternal Remembrance) are among the best novels of the last thirty years. Chandranna is the hero of Kattimani's *Jvālāmukhiya Mēle*. He is an idealistic journalist. He is persuaded to form a limited company with a rich man and settle down in Dharmapuri. He is attracted to the cause of the poor and scorns all opportunities of selling his pen whatever the price. Nor is he attracted by the butterfly-like daughter of a rich man. He finds in Ratna the companion of his soul and together they face the persecution of society and the rich. Apart from these two characters the novel portrays men and women of different persuasions and pursuits, from the cynical and hedonistic Shivayogi and Sangappa Setty who has licked the shoes of the British master and is now prepared to lick any pair of shoes provided the exercise is materially rewarding, to the poor man Rangayya who is prepared to starve so that Chandranna and his cause might prosper. The characterization is all more or less black and white. But there is a blazing idealism which imparts power to the work. Niranjana's *Cirasmaraṇe* is probably the best gift of the *Pragatiśīla* school. It is based on certain happenings in the village of Kayyur in Kerala, in 1941. The government ruthlessly put down those who were trying to organize the peasants, and four of them were sentenced to death. The happenings are presented through the eyes of several characters, belonging to different ages and classes. One character is a little boy, Chirakunda. His father is a petty farmer, but even the little independence he has is trampled underfoot and he is forced to become the tenant of a rich landlord. There is a scene of quiet poignancy; the father has been dragged away and the little boy imagines his father standing in the 'chavadi' (yard) of the insolent landlord; the poor man has tied a cloth around his waist (as a sign of obedience) and stands with one palm covering his mouth, the very picture of abject servility. Chirakunda's boyhood ends at that very moment. His physical frame has seen but a few winters, but there ends his youth. The narration, restrained and imbued with quiet strength, is drenched in compassion. T. R. Subba Rao was probably the first novelist to experiment with the stream-of-consciousness

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technique in his *Biḍugaḍeya Bēḍi* (In Quest of Freedom, 1953)—the story of a young woman battling for freedom in a man's world.

The Limitations and the Achievements

The *Pragatiśila* Movement blazed a new trail but unfortunately it was short-lived. There are quite a few reasons for this. First of all the *Pragatiśilas* were all prolific writers and soon they began to repeat themselves. Secondly, although they were influenced by writers like Bernard Shaw (Krishna Rao wrote bulky prefaces like Shaw) and by Marx, the intellectual content of the novels was often thin. There was plenty of rhetoric, but in course of time readers demanded something more than rhetoric. The writers had genuine sympathy for the workers, the havenots, the oppressed and the downtrodden, but sincerity alone cannot ensure the greatness of a work of literature. Krishna Rao was a born story-teller and therefore continued to have a considerable readership to the end. Subba Rao was a better craftsman than his master and he also commanded a picturesque and felicitous style. Kattimani knew rural life as few of his contemporaries did, and wielded a powerful pen. Niranjana had a wide range of interests and a fluent style, and a stronger intellectual content than the other writers of the school. Chaduranga combined revolutionary zeal with a genuine awareness of the beauty and goodness in life. So these writers survived. But the movement itself soon declined. It must be remembered that even before Krishna Rao put forth his thesis, writers like Karanth and Rangacharya had been as progressive as the most devoted member of the school. Their works have a quiet strength and an intellectual content which the novels of the *Pragatiśila* school could not offer. Some of the progressive writers did translate a few important novels of the West like Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* and Cuprin's *Yama* which could have familiarized the reader with the doctrinal basis of the movement. But not enough was done in this direction. When the *Navya* Movement burst on Kannada literature in the fifties it was easy for the highly academically trained stalwarts (most of them were teachers of literature in universities and colleges) to expose and pour ridicule upon the rhetoric, the lack of objectivity and of distancing, the sentimentality and the shallowness of much of *Pragatiśila* writing.

Looking back upon the *Pragatiśila* Movement, at this distance of time, one can see that the progressive writers were, in fact, only radicals among the *Navōdaya* writers. Even as he launched the movement Krishna Rao declared that the progressives were not atheists and that they had profound respect for the cultural heritage of India. Like the *Navōdaya* writers the *Pragatiśilas* had faith in the essential dignity and worth of man as man. The important differences were (1) that the *Navōdaya* writers did recognize social injustice and exploitation but believed that they could be ended through the reformation of the individual, while the *Pragatiśilas* were more conscious of the need to change the social set-up; (2) that there was a sense of urgency in the writings of the *Pragatiśilas*; and (3) that the *Pragatiśila* writer brushed aside the inhibitions of the *Navōdaya* writer and wrote more freely about sex, prostitution and similar subjects. The *Pragatiśilas*, however, did widen the range of experience assimilated in literature. Their contribution to the development of Kannada prose was also considerable.

The *Pragatiśila* Movement was short-lived. Krishna Rao's later novels were not very much different from the typical *Navōdaya* novel. He also wrote a number of social and historical novels. In the historical novels he sought to awaken a sense of pride in the glorious past. The best of his later novels like *Maṅgaḷasūtra* (1940) and *Rukmiṇi* (1954) were humanistic and sympathetic narratives of the struggles and upheavals in middle class families. His immense popularity was partly due to his exceptional gift as a story-teller; partly it was due to his lucid and lively style. But to me it seems that there was another and more important reason. Over the decades images of certaint ypes have come to inhabit the people's imagination. The ideal mother, the ideal housewife, the ideal landlord, the ideal purohit and priest, the ideal artist—images of such figures with the rosy tints of romanticism have become fixed in the people's imagination. Krishna Rao realized these images verbally as no other novelist had done. The reader found that an image which had been lurking in his imagination and of which he was dimly conscious was there—clearly portrayed. This pleasure of recognition drew him to the novels. The other important members of the Progressive School continued to write, and their novels embody the idealism and the love of justice, which inspired the *Pragatiśila* Movement.

Women Novelists

Before we turn to other aspects, a phenomenon of the mid-fifties merits attention. Anasuya Shankar (Anasūya Śaṅkar, 1928–63), better known by her *nom de plume* Triveṇi began to write in the fifties. She gained rare popularity and to this day has a wide circle of readers. She was content with portraying the domestic lives of middle-class families. Her soaring popularity was due to the fact that she gave expression to the hunger for affection and the desire for motherhood which are firmly implanted in the hearts of women. She also brought the academic use of psychology into the novel. While at times the reader gets chunks of academic psychology in a novel, in works like *Śarapañjara* (The Cage of Arrows, 1965) psychology is woven into the very texture of the story. The advent of Triveni on the literary scene ushered in quite a host of women novelists. Their range has generally remained quite narrow and their achievement limited.

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The Historical Novel

A reference has been made earlier to *Kumudini* and *Mayūra*. Few *Navōdaya* writers chose the medium of the historical novel. Between 1950 and 1970 a considerable number of historical novels appeared. Some novelists, like Subba Rao, collected material painstakingly. But almost all of them regarded the historical novel as a means of stimulating patriotic pride. Most of them did not really re-create the world to which they sought to transport the reader. There was little analysis of the forces at work weaving the complex tissue of the life of the age. What was worse, entirely modern ideas were put into the mouths of characters or were made to inspire their actions. The characters were generally types—the ideal queen, the ideal king, the ideal warrior and so on. An early exception was K. V. Iyer's *Śāntalā* (1954). For a few of his novels, Kattimani chose men and women who had fought in 1857, and in the context of the action—an upsurge all over the country—the simplification helped crystallize the issues. Subba Rao could re-create verbally the splendour and heroism of the chieftains of Chitradurga. His characters are generally simple but they are men and women of surging passions and determined action, and are full of life.

The two historical novels of Masti Venkatesh Iyengar ('Srinivasa', b. 1891) demand consideration for this reason —that, instead of being attempts at re-creating an epoch of glory, they seek to investigate the forces of decay and disintegration. The tiny state of Bidanur is presented in *Cannabasavanāyaka* (1950) and the tiny state of Coorg in *Cikkavīrarājēndra* (1956). The former state falls an easy prey to Hyder Ali of Mysore and the latter to the British. In other words, an external force has to intervene and restore order because the community has become incapable of subduing the forces of corruption and disintegration. Masti shows how the very institutions devised to maintain stability and act as brakes on tyranny only accelerate the process of decay when the human agents fail, either because they are too weak or because they mistake the priorities. In the latter novel feudalism is presented at its worst, and the inevitable disintegration of the system is portrayed. (But Masti combines this with the operation of the Law of Hubris and Nemesis.) Masti's novels are among the few historical novels which interpret history.

The Transition to Navya

Two novels, which some of the *Navya* critics claim as at least precursors of the new age, appeared in 1956 and 1957. The first is *Gangavva mattu Gangāmāyi* (Gangavva and Gangamayi, 1956) by Shankara Mokashi Punekar (Śaṅkara Mōkāṣi Punekar, b. 1928). Punekar deliberately stuck to old fashions; thus the novelist addresses his 'dear readers' and intervenes with his comments in the novel. The central figure of the novel is Kitti, who is not a bad fellow but extremely weak of will and easygoing. His weakness complicates the lives of others and makes him unhappy too. The wills of others clash in his life but he himself is too weak and indolent to decide or act. The creation of this 'anti-hero' links this novel with the *Navya* school. The second novel was *Grāmāyaṇa* (The Epic of a Village, 1957) by R. B. Kulakarni (Kulakarṇi, b. 1910), popularly known by his *nom de plume*, Rao Bahadur. The village Padalli is the hero of the novel. Here again we have a community in decay. The action begins with the seduction of a simple girl and the murder of a humble man. A powerful man, the younger brother of the second wife of the dead chief of the village, is under suspicion. The Panchayats assemble to investigate. Balacharya, the highly respected scholar-priest and virtually the conscience of the community, fails at the crucial hour; with this begins the process of disintegration. One act leads to another and the Law of Cause and Effect and the Law of Retribution operate inexorably to draw more and more of the characters into the vortex of destruction. Each iniquitous deed becomes another link in the chain by which all the leaders involved in the corruption and in the suppression of the truth are finally hanged. Balacharya realizes that to compromise with evil is to be enmeshed in it. Wherever the sinning leaders turn the past trips them up. Cleverness is overpowered by more unscrupulous cleverness. Finally the entire village is laid waste. The river flows by the village, the silent witness to the misdeeds of those whom it has fed, and Balacharya drowns himself in it. There are as many as 79 characters in the novel, and it is truly an epic of the village.

The Navya Novel

The publication of two poems by Gopalakrishna Adiga, *Kṛṣṇana Koḷalu* in August 1952 and *Himagiriya Kandara* the next month, may be regarded as marking the dawn of the *Navya* Movement. Five years had passed since the birth of freedom—five years which had filled discerning students of the country's course with dismay and disenchantment. The gulf between promise and performance, and between profession and practice were alarming. In this atmosphere the faith and hope of the *Navōdaya* age and the revolutionary fervour of the *Pragatiśīla* age both became mockeries. Adiga's poems expressed the disenchantment of the serious intellectual. It took some time for the *Navya* spirit to invade fiction, but invade it did, and Shanthinatha Desai's *Mukti* (Deliverance, 1961) is generally regarded as the first *Navya* novel.

The *Navya* novel is the embodiment of the experience of alienation in a vast and bewildering universe. The differences between this fiction on the one side and the *Navōdaya* and *Pragatiśīla* fiction on the other are clear. The pre-*Navya* novelist started with the assumption that life is meaningful

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and worth living. The *Navya* novelist started with the question: 'Is life worth living?' From this it follows that the novelist-reader relationship changed entirely. The *Navōdaya* novelist regarded the novel as a means of educating the emotions and directing the sympathies of the reader; he wished to present a scale of values which he regarded as the means of enriching life. In a sense, therefore, he was the friendly guide of the reader and the teacher of the community. The *Pragatiśīla* novelist sought to communicate his dedication to the cause of social revolution. He was thus in the vanguard of the warriors of revolution and an inspiration to the reader. But the *Navya* novelist, sick of the hypocrisy of the professed apostles of service and morality, was suspicious of his own enthusiasm and the panaceas of others. So he was introspective, sceptical and ironical. The familiar notion that the novel tells a story, with a beginning, a middle and an end, was rejected. The 'open novel', which traces the evolution of experience but does not necessarily tie up loose ends and conclude the story neatly, was preferred. (Novelists like Subba Rao and Kattimani had already experimented with this form.) Since language is intimately bound up with the life of the community the *Navya* writer felt that the very idiom had become debased and words and linguistic gestures had become empty or hypocritical. He was struggling to seek his own identity and endeavoured to use language as a means of probing experience. This demanded objectivity. Unlike the novelist of the earlier periods who judged his characters, the *Navya* novelist often suspended judgement. His narration tended to be disjointed at times, and he used dream and fantasy to embody complex experience. The earlier sense of decorum, which had weakened in *Pragatiśīla* writing itself, was totally rejected and inhibitions all but disappeared. There was greater emphasis on image and symbol.

Navōdaya literature had been influenced by classical Indian literature and the Romantic literature of England. *Pragatiśīla* literature was influenced by Ibsen, Shaw and Marxist writing. But it had not turned away entirely from ancient Indian literature. *Navya* literature was influenced by T. S. Eliot, the Absurdists and the Existentialists, and Kafka and Camus.

The output of novels in the quarter of a century of *Navya* writing has been very limited. At the most about a score of novels may be listed—they do not average even a novel a year. (In the seventies most of the *Navya* writers have moved beyond its borders.) We may consider two novels as representative of the *Navya* school.

Two Representative Novels

Saṁskāra (1966) by U. R. Ananthamurthy (Anantamūrti, b. 1932) has won all-India fame. It is the story of an earnest and learned Brahmin, Praneshacharya, who seeks to live as in his Taskmaster's eye. He has deliberately married a sickly woman that he might curb his passions. He has not yet crossed forty but he inspires reverence in one and all. But he, even he, has an antagonist—the unashamed hedonist Naranappa. (A subtle bond between the two is suggested.) Naranappa, too, is a Brahmin and Praneshacharya sees himself wrestling to redeem a doomed soul. Chandri is Naranappa's mistress—a woman of alluring loveliness. Naranappa's sudden death creates problems for the entire community. He had repudiated Brahminism; but how is his body to be disposed of? The community turns to the learned Praneshacharya for an answer, but even he is baffled. And then it happens that Chandri touches Praneshacharya, and at her touch nature brushes aside all restraint and he surrenders. His wife dies. He regards himself as no longer worthy of acting as the mentor of the community and wanders away. His experience widens. At the end of the novel he is on his way back to Durvasapura. He thinks of the future in expectation and apprehension.

The influence of Sartre is obvious. Equally obvious is the fact that the novelist is offering no scale of values by which a man ought to live. On the other hand Praneshacharya discovers that the values which he had inherited and by which he had been living collapse at the first touch of reality. He has honestly tried to live a life of *niṣkāmakarma* (action without expectation of reward); all fragrance is for the flower that decks the Lord and all beauty is that of Goddess Lakshmi, all enjoyment is for Lord Krishna—so he had believed. But at the first touch of Chandri's arms his convictions lay in the dust. A philosophy not evolved by one's own experience—a philosophy not tested by reality—cannot sustain a man. The novel does not end in despair. Praneshacharya is going back—he is apprehensive, but also full of expectation. He has gone beyond Durvasapura and beyond the holy texts; he has now dwelt in the world of realities. The work is remarkable for the restrained tone, the objectivity of the narration, the refusal to yield to the temptation to satirize at any point (except once with reference to a very minor character) and the evocative language. It is one of the finest gifts of the *Navya* school.

Biruku (1967) by P. Lankesh (Laṅkēṣ, b. 1935) is a representative of the *Navya* school in many ways. The central figure, Basavaraj, is a young man employed as a Research Assistant. He finds that the world of the elders—the world of his professor, his wife, his daughter, for example—is all 'phony'. He seeks to escape from this suffocating world but is thwarted on every side. The novel uses fantasy extensively. Learning, friendship, leadership, sex—all are found to be 'phony'. Lankesh's style has a rare vigour. He can keep the narrative moving while exploring the consciousness of his 'hero'. Clearly the work is indebted to Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*; and the fact that Basavaraj sees only hypocrisy everywhere—without the hint of an exception—gradually makes the reader wonder whether

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the world consists only of men and women beyond redemption or if there is something wrong with the viewer. But all the same the novel is a typical product of the *Navya* school in its relentless investigation of the truth about men and attitudes, its confident satire and its use of fantasy.

An Assessment

The *Navya* school seems a spent force now. The reasons are not far to seek. For one thing the output was too meagre to sustain the movement. For another, most readers—even those who take literature seriously—found the reading of most of these novels a trial. Novels like *Saṁskāra* reaped a rich harvest of popularity, but most others demanded a measure of labour, learning and patience which restricted their appeal to a small circle of the initiated. A major reason for the rejection of *Navya* novels by the next generation of novelists was that its characters neither face life nor accept its responsibilities. This attitude did not appeal particularly in the changing national and social context.

The *Navya* novel was able to arrest the ebullience of mere idealism, as the *Pragatiśīla* novel had been able to arrest vague spirituality. It radically changed the novelist's approach to his subject and his medium; it influenced his attitude towards his reader; and it brought a sharper awareness of the novelist's responsibility in handling language. The *Navyas* stressed that form was meaning. A work of literature is not an exposition of values but an exploration of experience. Language being the means of the exploration of experience, the novelist has to be faithful to his experience and bend language to his purpose.

The Scene Beyond Navya

It would be a mistake to imagine that the fifties and sixties belonged entirely to the *Navyas*. Writers of the first generation of modern Kannada literature like Masti, Karanth and Devudu continued to write and to produce significant novels. Puttappa's *Malagaḷalli Madumagaḷu* (Daughter of the Forest Hill), another epic portrayal of Malnad life in which the sway of the attraction of the sexes is presented at various levels, was published in 1967. The next generation of novelists—including, for example, V. M. Inamdar, G. B. Joshi, Basavaraja Kattimani, Ta. Ra. Subba Rao and H. L. Nage Gowda—produced some of its best works in these decades. This was also the era of Triveni. One novel deserves mention here. This is V. K. Gokak's (Gōkāk, b. 1909) *Samarasave Jīvana* (Life is Harmony, 1931–53). *Ijjoḍu* (The Ill-matched Pair—*Ijjoḍu* is the first part of *Samarasave Jīvana*) a novel of 172 pages which appeared in 1931, grew to a novel of more than 1300 pages by 1953. It comprised six parts by then and a seventh part has been added recently. *Ijjoḍu* is the tragic tale of a girl who suffers because of her unfortunate marriage. In the latter half of the novel, her brother, Narahari, becomes a seeker engaged in a quest of the meaning of life. He is contrasted with two friends, Seena and Vishnu. The characters, numbering scores, move from one part of India to another and from continent to continent and the action moves in two worlds—the world without and the world within. Sensual, material and spiritual pursuits are juxtaposed and a variety of attitudes and values emerge. The novel has not been able to transmute all the material into a work of imagination. But it is an exceptional odyssey of the spirit.

A novelist who has won an enviable popularity is S. L. Bhyrappa (Bhairappa, b. 1934). His first important novel, *Vaṁśavṛkṣa* (Family Tree, 1965) won immediate popularity. It would be difficult to imagine a greater contrast to the *Navya* novel than Bhyrappa's. His major characters have clearly articulated philosophies—or, at least, clear attitudes and aspirations—and seek to live by them. They take decisions, make choices and face the consequences. The clash of wills and attitudes keeps the action moving. A Bhyrappa novel realizes more clearly than a *Navya* novel the bustle and the sequence of minor crises involved in the very business of existence. Like Shivarama Karanth, Bhyrappa pours a wealth of experience into a novel. In his more recent novels the characters are less embodiments of values and attitudes and are more rounded than in the earlier novels. Curiously enough his best work up to date is *Gṛhabhaṅga* (The Breaking of the Family, 1970) in which the central character has no crystallized philosophy. It is the saga of a rustic woman who fights for the survival of her children in a cruel and hostile environment. Marriage has shackled her to a creature who can only live at the level of instinct and whom, therefore, it would be idle to judge by standards applicable to normal human beings. He is a millstone around her neck. A husband who is a curse, a foul-tongued mother-in-law, cantankerous neighbours, a moth-eaten social set-up, poverty, disease—nothing can daunt the heroic, humble woman who lives and struggles so that her children may survive. She is crude, ignorant, and harsh of tongue. But she represents the elemental power of woman as mother.

In the sixties and seventies there has arisen a group of novelists who seek to use the novel as the vehicle of social change. They are like the *Pragatiśīlas* in their faith in literature as a revolutionary force. But the influence of *Navya* literature may be seen in the absence of the naiveté of the *Pragatiśīlas* and in the greater interest in the analysis of the workings of the minds of the characters. Among the recent novels of this school may be mentioned (as illustrations) Srikrishna Alanahalli's *Kāḍu* (Jungle), Kamarupi's *Kudure-moṭṭe* (Horse's Egg) and Vishukumar's *Karāvaḷi* (Seashore). More recent novels like Lankesh's *Mussanjeya Kathāprasaṅga*, Chandrashekara Kambar's *Karimayi* and Yashwant Chittal's *Ṣikāri* (Hunter) suggest that the form may acquire new dimensions in the eighties.

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Kashmiri

ALI MOHAMMED LONE

Beginning

Prose writing in Kashmiri is of recent origin and the beginnings in this direction were made only two and a half decades earlier. Prior to this, some stray and insignificant pieces of prose by way of translations of some religious writings, and a very small collection of popular sayings, idioms and proverbs were the only specimens available in the Kashmiri language. Systematic and serious writing in prose started under the direct influence of other literatures particularly Urdu fiction when most of the present writers switched over to Kashmiri from Urdu. At this time progressive literature was the fashion of the day and, therefore, the early writings in prose and verse were almost confined to the themes permitted by the dictates of the Progressive Movement in literature. Poems, stories, sketches and playlets were literal pieces of propaganda. Towards the middle of the fifties some significant changes took place in the international political arena and a rethinking started among the writers living in this part of the world also. The Progressive Writers Association, working under the banner of All State Cultural Congress, received a setback and almost all of its active and energetic workers left the movement for good. This drift from the progressive ideal gave birth to an atmosphere of indecision and scepticism and the writers, who were conditioned to see the 'end of a merciless long night' (capitalist system) and to look with hope to the nevitable 'rising of the Sun' (dawn of socialism), almost found themselves lost. It was exactly at this juncture that the first ever efforts at novel writing were made. The novel was chosen because it offered a wide canvas and yet wider horizons to express what was so far forbidden to those writers by their erstwhile political mentors disguised as literary protagonists.

The pioneers in the field were Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din (b.1928), Mohammad Amin Kamil (b. 1924) and Ali Mohammad Lone (b. 1926). Their novels, viz. *Dōd Dag* (The Pain and Anguish, 1957) by Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din, *Gati Manz Gaś* (Light Amid Darkness, 1957) by Amin Kamil and *Aesy Ti Chhi Insān* (We Too Are Human, 1957) by Lone did not create much of a stir for reasons which till this day act as hurdles in the way of the Kashmiri language and its literature. A very small number of writers and an equally insignificant number of readers of the language either hailed these works as writings of historical importance and literary merit or rejected them as pieces of immature prose written in indecent haste with the aim of falling in the line of pioneer novelists. This none-too-welcome reaction combined with the problems of marketing and selling of books disheartened the writers and they reverted to their original fields of creative activity. Thus a big vacuum loomed over the field of the novel for 15 years or so and then G. N. Gauhar (b. 1934), Bansi Nirdosh (b. 1928) and Amar Malmohi (b. 1935) came forth with their novels.

Translations

In the intervening period some significant translations of novels of Rabindranath Tagore (*Chokher Bali* which means 'Eyesore' and which was translated into English and published as *Binodini*), Maxim Gorky (*Mother*), V. V. Morrier (*The Adventures of Haji Baba of Isphahan*), Zainul Abideen

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Rehnuma (*Payāmber*) and Leo Tolstoy (*War and Peace*) were done by P. N. Pushp, Ali Mohammad Lone, Shamsud-Din Ahmad (two books) and Muzaffer Azim. Lone and Azim got the Soviet Land Nehru Award for their translations in 1972 and 1978 respectively. Unlike the original novels in the language, these translations were surprisingly very well received. Translations of *Mother* and *Payāmber* were sold out in a comparatively short time and not a single copy is now available with the publishers.

Dōd Dag. Akhtar Mohi-ud-Din's *Dōd Dag* is the first novel and conforms to the traditional technique. Thematically it is probably the most unrealistic piece of fiction written so far in Kashmiri. Abdul Ghani is the main character of the story and he is out on a sex-spree like a Kashmiri Casanova losing no chance to spare the object of his lust. After marrying Fatima, with the aim of seducing her younger sister Raja, he divorces the former and marries the latter. Like a maniac Abdul Ghani stalks the dark rooms of a dilapidated house where his last victim Raja is suffering from tuberculosis. Her misery and helplessness ultimately work the over-tried and unfailing miracle and a change of heart takes place in Abdul Ghani. The narrative ends with a note of repentance and forgiveness. J. L. Kaul commenting on Akhthar's novel writes:

> The author has grip on characterization and the complexity of characters is revealed as situations develop and the plot thickens and, what is significant, the characters and events interact on one another. The characters are all individualized, human and recognizable. In *Dōd Dag* the suffering and humiliation of two orphan sisters unobstrusively deepen our understanding of the social milieu.
>
> (J. L. Kaul, *Studies in Kashmiri*)

Gati Manz Gāś. Kamil's *Gati Manz Gāś* has been written with the backdrop of the 1947 tribal raid on Kashmir. Fatima, a schoolteacher, is the main character. She is away from her home and works in Baramullah, the main target of the tribal marauders. Before the town is overrun by the raiders she had become the object of curiosity of a Hindu shopkeeper Ramkrishen, and Hasa Lala, her landlord's son who proposes to marry her. She, like a proverbial chaste Kashmiri girl rejects the offer because it should have been made to her father and not directly to her. Fatima equally deplores the advances of her first lover Ramkrishen and hates him. She, however, allows him to hide in her home when raiders enter the town and butcher the Hindus living there. Her house is also raided and a flying bullet aimed at Fatima is taken by Ramkrishen on his chest. He dies and Fatima informs the raiders that he was her husband. The raiders are thrown out of the town. Fatima returns to her home and resolves never to marry.

The story of the novel is narrated by three casual characters who meet the author on his journey to Fatima's village to stay there. It is in the *dāstān* style but the three narratives look like a patch work and do not exercise much of a grip over the reader. The characterization is weak. Fatima does not seem to belong to the soil and is quite unconvincing. Ramkrishen and Hasa Lala are not wholesome and seem to have been created in haste. The concluding chapters of the novel are weak and written rather half-heartedly.

[*Dāstān Goi* or naration of *dāstān* till recently was a very popular mode of entertainment for rural audiences. Usually the *dāstān* used to be rendered by a single narrator without any songs but sometimes he would have a party of singers also].

Aesy Ti Chhi Insān. *Aesy Ti Chhi Insān* by Ali Mohammad Lone has been written in documentary style and deals with a journey to the holy cave of Amarnath. The author, his friends (Kedar, Pran and Sahni), some ponywallas, labourers and pilgrims, plus the awe-inspiring scenic beauty surrounding the route to the holy cave form the backbone of the novel. 'Despite its distinct qualities *Aesy Ti Chhi Insān* has not become a novelette and has remained a reportage. Not that the author has used the technique of reportage in it but that the theme of the work has not had a smooth start, development and conclusion' (A. K. Rahbar, 'Novel in Kashmiri', *Sone Adab*, 1976, J & K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages).

Mujrim. *Mujrim* (The Culprit, 1967) by Ghulam Nabi Gauhar is a long and tiresome narration of a criminal case being decided in courts. Hajira is in love with Bashir, an engineer boy of a Muslim priest's family. Her father is a petty shopkeeper. Despairing of her love she commits suicide and her father is charged with her murder. The last letter written by Hajira before her suicide is not made available to the court and it takes the author, himself connected with the legal profession, well over two hundred pages to keep this tiny paper out of the court proceedings. The alleged murderer is proved innocent but he breathes his last with his acquittal.

The novel suffers from many drawbacks. The author has failed to create suspense among the readers as they somehow know that 'the culprit' is innocent. The novel, as it is, hangs by a very thin thread: the letter. The language used by the characters is not theirs but obviously belongs to the writer who makes generous use of his own and others' verses and poems. An aura of artificiality is evident in the dialogues of the characters. '*Mujrim* is technically and thematically a novelette but owing to some obvious defects it has remained incomplete as such. The reader is conscious from the very beginning that Ahmadullah (the father of the girl) is guiltless and he will be freed ultimately. The incidents are rather unnecessarily long. Hajira in love with Bashir sounds unconvincing. Their love-letters are devoid of real human

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sentiment as the author has taken much pains in writing these in highly ornamental and decorative language.... Those portions of the novel which deal with the court proceedings, are, however, full of life' (A. K. Rahbar, op. cit.).

Myul. *Myul* (Reunion, 1973) is yet another novel by G. N. Gauhar which is even less satisfying than the first one. The entire theme seems to have been inspired by the story of some cheap Indian movie. Certain incidents, gimmicks in films, appear to have been thrust in to the novel making it all the more unconvincing. Mehmuda and Jaleel are in love. They get married but after marriage Mehmuda alleges that Jaleel is impotent. Meena and Moti, friends to the couple, creep in and after some unsavoury experiments bring the two closer. As in his first novel here also the author has not cared much to write 'down-to-earth realistic prose' avoiding artificiality in narration and dialogues. His drscription of Jaleel, like that of Bashir in *Mujrim*, makes the latter appear unlike a full-blooded male.

Akh Daur. *Akh Daur* (An Epoch, 1974) by Bansi Nirdosh pertains to the institution of prostitution in Kashmir during the time of the last Dogra rulers. Nagina, a village damsel, is hoodwinked by a pimp and taken to a brothel. She is charmed by the beauty of the surroundings, music, dance and the atmosphere of plenty and pleasure. Balbadra, a rich Hindu merchant who frequents 'the house' falls in love with Nagina. He loses all interest in his home and trade, and dotes on Nagina like a young and steadfast lover. Nagina responds to his overtures and the two live like a married couple in the brothel house. But when Nagina becomes pregnant Balbadra proposes to take her away from the ill-famed locality. At this point his wife Rajarani comes forward and willingly agrees to take both her faithless husband and his spouse into her house.

Akh Daur deals with an institution which was one of the main sources of revenue to the then Maharaja's treasury. Every new entrant to the profession had to remit a registration free and an annual tax. Once a woman entered the profession she was not able to give it up. The rules framed by the government for running the institution were very cruel, rigid and inhuman, and the victims of the profession were subjected to great misery, deprivation and humiliation. But unfortunately in *Akh Daur*, Bansi Nirdosh has simply overlooked these hard realities and limited himself mainly, and superficially, to the narration of the story. The very name 'Akh Daur' suggests something significant, vast, but the novel offers just a slice of the epoch with which it is dealing. Characterization is weak and none of the characters persists in memory as pointed out by Rahbar: 'The institution of prostitution which existed in the landlordism, had many diverse aspects. The writer has not been successful in depicting the atmosphere of these houses of sin. He has also not been able to recapture the sweetness of music and grace of dance, the intrigues of the inmates, the inhuman trade of selling and supplying human beings connected with the profession. Some superficial allusions towards these facts have been given by him. Not a single character has had a proper development and that is why the reader hardly remembers one' (A. K. Rahbar, op. cit.).

Trēś Ta Tarpaṇ. Yet another novel *Trēś Ta Tarpaṇ* (Offering Water to the Dead, 1976) by Amar Malmohi also does not come up to any standard. The title refers to the Hindu custom of offering water to the departed souls. The author, like a frustrated and unsuccessful middle-class man, criticizes everything that does not suit his convenience and finds fault with everything that happens around him. His cynicism pervades throughout; his narrations become statements and the novel leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

Considering the very slow pace of novel writing and the meagre output in the field, it would be incorrect to assert that novel writing was a gradual process in story narration in Kashmiri. Neither did the publication of these novels create a climate for novel reading or novel writing as such.

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Malayalam

K. M. THARAKAN

As in the other languages of India, in Malayalam too, the first literary form to appear was the narrative verse either giving a description of some event or place, or telling a story, folk, mythological or puranic. Tales in prose did not spring forth in Malayalam, though narratives imbued with valour, love and pity like and *Vaṭakkan Pāṭṭukaḷ* (Ballads of North Malabar), with well-knit plots were produced between the 14th and 17th centuries. From the beginning, the people of Kerala were familiar with the Mahabharata, Ramayana, *Pañcatantra*, *Kathāsarit Sāgara*, *Vikramāditya* tales, *Daśakumāra Carita* and the tales of the *Arabian Nights*. These formed an inexhaustible fountain of delight and inspiration to the Kerala writers of fiction. However, the novel as a literary genre was imported into Kerala, as in other parts of India, from the West, especially from England.

The Novel

We are now familiar with many categories of the novel, classical, romantic, surrealist, modernist and even post-modernist, each with a definition. The novel in general was certainly different from mythology, or folklore, in so far as it sought to root itself in the spatio-temporal world of a society with the ethos of a value system as its frame of reference. It concerned itself with the reassessment of values as they were evolved by man situated in a social milieu. Narrative pieces that evoke emotions without value-questioning are also labelled fiction, but they hardly do justice to the high vocation of the genre. Such value-questioning, in relation to the individual in society, became vital in the modern world where the people who liberated themselves from serfdom and the rule of the clergy emerged as the middle class. The novel is basically the literary genre of the middle class; its range grew wider, and its variety richer as years passed; hence the multiplicity of its definitions.

Early Attempts

The first prose piece to appear in Malayalam having the semblance of a novel is a translation of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* done by the English missionary Rev. Joseph Peet and published in 1840. Most critics have their reservations about accepting a translation as a genuine novel in Malayalam work. There are others who consider *Ghātakavadham* (1878,) the translation of Mrs Collin's *Slayer Slain* (1859) published by her husband, as the first novel in Malayalam; as it seeks to question the value system of a particular community (the Syrian Christians) in Kerala. This novel has much in common with Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Like most of the social novels that were to appear later, *Ghātakavadham* aimed at social reformation even as it narrated a love story. Neither the style of the novel, nor its form has anything special to commend itself. *Pullēlikkuñcu* (Kunchu of Pulleli, 1882), by Archdeacon Koshy, which is considered an early novel is nothing but a dialogue between an evangelist and a Hindu on the superior merits of Christianity. These narratives and prose works by leading missionaries like Hermann Gundert, and Benjamin Bailey, and native pastors like Rev. George Mathen gave Malayalam prose a flexibility and range of expression which was an advantage to the writers who came to wield the literary genre of the novel in the last quarter of the 19th century.

In the estimate of certain critics *Kundalata* (1887) of Appu Nedungadi is really the first novel in Malayalam. Nedungadi has been considerably influenced by Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. *Kundalata* is a romance packed with adventure and sentiment, with no relation to the social life in Kerala. The novel is an entertainer, it tells a story. Credit is due to it for its racy and effective dialogue.

Chandu Menon and the Social Novel. In December 1889, O. Chandu Menon (Cantu Mēnōn, 1847–1900), a judge by profession, gifted with a high sense of humour and the art of narration, brought out *Indulēkha* which is rightly hailed as the first major novel in Malayalam. He attempted another novel, *Śārada* but died before he could complete it. Even in the unfinished form *Śārada* has attained a place of eminence in Malayalam. The novel is remarkable for its humour and the sharpness of its social criticism. Both *Indulēkha* and *Śārada* are set against the matriarchal system that prevailed among the Hindus in Kerala. Madhavan and Indulekha, the hero and the heroine of *Indulēkha*, belong to a joint family ruled by their grand-uncle Panchu Menon who at first denies Madhavan the right to marry Indulekha as Madhavan insisted on introducing his cousin to English education against the expressed desire of the old tyrant. Vengefully Panchu Menon invites a rich Brahmin, Soori Namboodirippadu, to marry young Indulekha. By the sheer brilliance of her wit Indulekha nonplusses the old suitor who finds consolation in marrying a distant cousin of hers. Madhavan and Indulekha temporarily separated, are reunited in the end. In this novel, Chandu Menon like

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his contemporary Bengali novelists exposes the flaws in the joint family system. Very shortly the Brahmin domination was to cease, education was to liberate the people and the Hindu family was to be rebuilt on a sounder basis. The novel excels in pitting the sharp common sense of Indulekha against both the orthodoxy of Panchu Menon and the conceit and licentiousness of Soori Namboodiripadu. The test of excellence of a great comic novel, even a realistic novel, is not so much its verisimilitude to reality as its disclosure of the incongruities and follies in men and society.

Śārada is peopled with a variety of characters taken from real life. The major theme of the novel is the legitimacy of the daughter of an aristocratic Nair lady who had deserted her old Brahmin husband and married a man of her choice. It vividly draws a number of interesting characters ranging from the villainous Vaithi Paṭṭar to the upright Sankaran Nair. As in *Indulēkha*, in *Śārada* also Chandu Menon exploits humour exposing the disparities and disproportions inherent in the lives of individuals and social situations. For example, there is the description of the consternation felt by the Brahmins of 'Udayanthali Maṭham' as they suspect that Sarada who stays in one of their houses may be the daughter of a Muslim woman. Far ahead of his times Chandu Menon exposed to sheer ridicule the hollowness of the taboos of the higher castes in Kerala. Both *Indulēkha* and *Śārada* are powerful works of fiction in the adequacy of their structure and the revaluation of social values.

C. V. Raman Pillai and the Historical Novel. At about the time Chandu Menon depicted the middle-class society of Malabar, C. V. Raman Pillai (Rāman Piḷḷai, 1858–1922) concerned himself with creating a pantheon of heroes whose morale upheld a kingdom and inspired its people with high ideals for several generations. From Travancore history he obtained the raw materials for his main characters who were valiant Nair chieftains and warriors supporting a benevolent monarchy. To C. V. Raman Pillai the best form of government ensured the progress of all, through all, under the guidance of the ablest and the wisest men. Such were the kings of Travancore, Marthanda Varma and Dharma Raja, the titular heroes of two of his novels. On Dharma Raja he wrote another novel under the title *Rāmarājā Bahadūr* (1919). In *Mārttāṇḍa Varma* the king triumphs over his opponents mainly through the prowess of Anantha Padmanabhan, a valiant Nair youth. Thrivikraman in *Rāmarājā Bahadūr* is his peer in valour and heroism. C. V. Raman Pillai chiefly concentrated on the development of the complex character Raja Kesava Das, who embodied in himself the profound loyalty of the Nair community to royalty. By 1890 the Nairs in Kerala began to exercise their power in the kingdom, they being the most powerful group in the emerging middle class. Love, patriotism, heroism, court intrigues, battles, conspiracy, self-sacrifice, selfishness, aggressiveness, devotion—all have their place in the novels of C. V. Raman Pillai which present a panorama of characters ranging from the king to the outcast. The novelist has portrayed his characters in deep colours, and they live on in our minds. He resorts to a number of devices and introduces quite a few sensational scenes in order to create an illusion of historical reality. Though occasionally pedantic, the language of C. V. Raman Pillai is noted for its grandeur and its power to arouse a sea of emotions. It is perfectly at home in the depiction of both royal pomp and splendour as well as rustic simplicity. His social novel *Prēmāmṛtam* (Nectar of Love) has not been much of a success. In it he fails both in exposing the follies of men and society and in making a serious reappraisal of social values. C. V. Raman Pillai's reputation rests chiefly on his great historical romances. They are remarkable for their picturization of memorable scenes from Kerala history, their portrayal of great characters like Subhadra, Chanthrakkaran, Raja Kesava Dasan and Dharma Raja, and also the great ideals they consistently uphold. As mighty verbal icons they have few equals in the language. C. V. Raman Pillai has a profound sense of the nobility of life, its tragedy and the ultimate triumph of the human spirit. Thanks to the flowering of the geniuses of Chandu Menon and Raman Pillai, the Malayalam novel was enriched with a few works of undisputed greatness.

Varieties of Fiction. Not a few writers sought to ape Chandu Menon's *Indulēkha*. Consequently social romances named after their heroines began to flood Malayalam literature in the following period. It was with a view to satirizing these petty works that the talented humorist Kizhakkeppattu Raman Menon published the skit, *Paṟaṅṅōṭi Pariṇayam* (Marriage of Parangodi, 1892) which marked the introduction of the satirical novel in Malayalam. *Virutan Śaṅku* (Sanku the Smart, 1912) by Karat Achutha Menon (Kārāṭṭ Acuta Mēnōn, 1867–1913) presented the readers with a fine example of the picaresque novel. It is remarkable for its comedy. Two other types of novels to make their appearance in the early period were the allegorical and the detective. K. Narayana Kurukkal (Nārāyaṇa Kurukkaḷ, 1861–1948) who strongly resented the tyranny of the Dewan of Travancore employed the technique of historical allegory to expose the evils of the administration. His novels *Pāṟappuṟam* (Surface of Rock, 1906) and *Udaya Bhānu* (The Rising Sun, 1925) are both powerful political satires, the first of the type to appear in the language. The first sleuth story in Malayalam is *Bhāskara Mēnōn* (1909) by Appan Thampuran (Appan Tampurān, 1876–1942). Neither this nor Murkothu Kumaran's (Mūrkōt Kumāran, 1874–1941) *Kanakam Mūlam* (Because of Gold, 1905) nor Kesava Kurup's *Mādhava Kuṟup* has had any palpable impact on the readers. Appan Thampuran's *Bhūtarāyar* (1923), though remarkable for the beauty of its prose style, fails as a historical romance. *Akbar* (1894), a translation of a Dutch

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novel, done by Kerala Varma Valiakoil Thampuran (1845–1914), found many readers, thanks to the elegance of his style.

Entertainers. In the first three decades of the 20th century, readers initiated into the delights of the historical romance of C. V. Raman Pillai welcomed such works of fancy with great enthusiasm. *Kēraḷēśvaran* (1941) by T. Raman Nambisan, *Cēramān Perumāḷ* (3rd ed., 1952) by Kappana Krishna Menon, *Kēraḷa Simham* (Lion of Kerala, 1941) and *Kalyāṇamal* (1937) by K. M. Panikkar, *Kēraḷa Puṭran* (Son of Kerala, 3rd ed., 1924) by Ampadi Narayana Poduval, *Vaḷḷuvakkammāran* by C. Kunju Rama Menon and *Amṛta Puḷinam* (1923) by Pallath Raman, are thrilling tales of love and adventure with no pretensions at philosophizing. Among these, *Kēraḷēśvaran* at least may put forth its claim as a major romance like *Rāmarājā Bahadūr* of C. V. Raman Pillai. Most of these novels sought to recapture some episode in the ancient annals of Kerala and to sing the praise of some hero of the past. The values they upheld, such as loyalty to the king and respect for the lords, lost their relevance with the passing of time, and as such they are considered chiefly as entertainers. The social novels of the period fought shy of social criticism and indulged in innocuous fun. However, a few entertainers of the period like *Mīnākṣi* (1890) by C. Chathu Nair, *Snēhalata* (1918) by Kannan Menon, *Veḷḷikai* by Murkkottu Kumaran and *Bālikāsadanam* (Home for Girls, 1921) by Kocheeppan Tharakan (Koccīppan Tarakan, 1861–1940) deserve mention for the beauty of their structure and felicity of style.

The Few among the Many. Among the many novels that cropped up in the first period we may regard four or five, at the most, as outstanding by virtue of their powerful social criticism. *Pariṣkārappāti* (The Semi-civilized, 1925) of Kunnukuzhiyil Kochu Thomman gives a portrayal of the social customs of the Syrian Christians of the time and the liberation that English education brings to its women. *Sarasvatī Vijayam* (Victory of Saraswati) of Potheri Kunjampu shows how an ostracized Brahmin girl achieves success through education and how a casteless boy emerges in society by dint of his effort. K. M. Panikkar's *Doraśśiṇi* (Mem Sahib, 1931) is a satire on women who make themselves objects of ridicule by their unquestioning imitation of western women. *Haridāsi* paints the joy of liberation felt by the casteless at the Temple Entry Proclamation. These novels were eclipsed by the excellence of Bhavathrathan Namboodirippad's (Bhavatṛātan Nampūtirippāḍ) *Aphanṭe Makaḷ* (Uncle's Daughter, 1933) remarkable for its powerful criticism of the Brahmin social set-up and the artistic grace of its structure. The novel exposes the incongruities in the matrimonial customs of the Brahmins and the anomalies in their social practices and also traces the development of the heroine, a Brahmin girl, in conformity with the changing social patterns of the state.

Translations. The earliest translations of fiction to appear in the language were from English and Bengali. The best works in world literature are translated into English, naturally therefore Indian writers looked upon English as the gateway to world literature. Through English they became familiar with European, American, Latin American, African and Japanese literatures in course of time. The process of translation went on all through the years, so much so that at present there are in the language good translations of quite a few works of the major writers of the world: Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Walter Scott, Alexander Dumas, Victor Hugo, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Herman Melville, Andre Gide, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Sholokov and others. The first to appear were the translations of some of the novels of Walter Scott, Alexander Dumas and Victor Hugo. The translation of Hugo's *Les Miserables* by Nalappat Narayana Menon under the title *Pāvaṅṅaḷ* (The Poor People, 1925) was a source of inspiration to the Malayalam novelists. Of the Indian novels, those in Bengali had the greatest impact on Malayalam literature. It is as though there is some inexplicable identity between the tastes and sensibilities of the Malayalis and the Bengalis. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore were the first to exercise their influence on Malayalam fiction. The translations of *Durgēśanandini* and *Kapāla Kuṇḍala* of Bankim Chandra were very popular. Then came the translations of *Dēvadās* and *Caritṛahīn* of Sarat Chandra. The novels of Tagore were introduced into the language at a later period. The novelists of other Indian languages who have been translated into Malayalam include Vibhutibhushan Chattopadhyaya, Bimal Mitra, Sankar and Tarasankar Banerjee (Bengali), Yashpal and Premchand (Hindi), Khandekkar (Marathi), Sivaram Karanth and Ananthamoorthi (Kannada) and Akilon and Jayakantan (Tamil). In the early period, along with *Mārttāṇḍa Varma* and *Indulēkha*; *Durgēśanandini* and *Akbar* had exercised a salutary influence on the development of Malayalam fiction. In the forties and the fifties, Hugo, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Flaubert, Knut Hamsun, Melville and Steinbeck influenced Malayalam novelists. In the sixties and the seventies the most powerful external influences on Malayalam were those of Kafka, Sartre and Camus. The translations of some of the novels of Kafka and Camus renovated the sensibility of the reader of Malayalam fiction to a considerable degree.

The Progressive Movement

As elsewhere in India, Kerala too saw the awakening of the working class and the lower middle class in the thirties. The social novel of the type introduced by O. Chandu Menon,

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in its conventional form, was inadequate to meet their demands for self-expression. The thirties saw the emergence of a band of young writers wielding the short story as an effective weapon for social reformation. Theirs was a determined effort to evolve a new form of fiction for a 'revaluation of values', especially social values, in conformity with the need of the time and the urges of the people. Marxism helped them analyze the basic structure of their society. Freudian psychology enabled them to probe the inner chambers of the human psyche. Gandhiji's call for the liberation of man from caste-structures and serfdom as well as for the political freedom of the country had its impact on the Indian writers. However, the radical among them inspired by the concrete example of the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia preferred the Marxist way to the Gandhian for the achievement of political, social and economic freedom. The Progressive Literature Movement that gathered momentum in the North under the leadership of Premchand and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya exercised its sway on the Kerala writers infused with revolutionary zeal. They were given the intellectual leadership they needed by two scholar critics, Kesari Balakrishna Pillai and M. P. Paul. It did not take long for the writers of short stories to modify the existing form of the social novel to suit the demands and urges of the new period.

The Reawakening of the Malayalam Novel

Muhammad Basheer. The second period, namely, the period of the renaissance of the Malayalam novel began in the forties with the publication of Vaikkom Muhammad Basheer's (Vaikam Muhammad Baṣīr, b. 1910) *Bālyakālasakhi* (The Childhood Friend, 1944) and P. Kesava Dev's *Ōṭayil Ninnu* (From the Gutter, 1944) and extends up to the middle of the sixties. Both *Bālyakālasakhi* and *Ōṭayil Ninnu* are, in their form, extensions of the short story of the socialist realist school. *Bālyakālasakhi* narrates poignantly the tragic love story of Majid and Suhra against the social set-up of the Muslim community of Kerala. Had it not been for considerations of wealth, Suhra's Vappa (father) would have given her in marriage to Majid. If only the rich came to the succour of the poor, tragedies like those of Majid could have been averted. Critics hailed *Bālyakālasakhi* as a book on a par with *Indulēkha* and *Śārada*. They found in Muhammad Basheer a master of the art of fiction, an estimate that was confirmed as Basheer followed *Bālyakālasakhi* with a series of social novels, *Inṭuppāppakkorānōṇḍārnnu* (My Grandfather had an Elephant, 1953), *Matilukaḷ* (The Walls, 1965), *Pāttummayuṭe Āṭə* (Pathumma's Sheep, 1959), *Śabdaṅṅaḷ* (Sounds, 1948), *Maraṇattinṭe Niḻalil* (In the Shadow of Death, 1951), *Ānavāriyum Ponkuriśum* (Anavari and the Golden Cross, 1950) and *Māntṛikappūcca* (The Magic Cat, 1968). Each is short, packed with literary sensibility of the very first order, each is different from the other in its form and mood, enlivened by the unique personality and style of the novelist. As a refreshing contrast to the mood of pessimism permeating *Bālyakālasakhi*, the mood is one of robust optimism in *Inṭuppāppakkorānōṇḍarnnu*, which shows how goodwill on the part of the 'haves' can bring relief to the 'have-nots'. The novel is a realistic comedy which expresses the hollowness of the snobbery of feudal aristocrats who were fast losing their grip on the lower classes in society. *Śabdaṅṅaḷ* is a powerful revelation of the helplessness and misery of many an unemployed wretch in the days of the Second World War. It exposes the thousand evils which the Kerala society was vulnerable to in those days. *Maraṇattinṭe Niḻalil* is philosophic in tone. *Māntṛikappūcca* is a comic piece. *Pāttummayuṭe Āṭə*, autobiographical in details, has about it an ethereal charm and delicate beauty which renders it a unique piece of fiction in the language. *Matilukaḷ* is a rare blend of humour and pathos, sensuousness and romantic longing, both realistic and philosophic. The hero of the novel is a prisoner very much in love with a woman prisoner on the other side of the wall; her smell intoxicates him. He would rather dwell in the cell inhaling her smell than be denied it by a gift of freedom. The stories of Ānavāri Raman Nair and his friends equal Steinbeck's stories in *Cannery Row*. Basheer's style, distinct with humour, pathos and its deep undertone of poetry, is remarkable for its sensibility and suggestive power.

P. Kesav Dev. Along with Basheer, P. Kesav Dev (Kēśava Dēv, 1905–83), Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, S. K. Pottekkat and P. C. Kuttikrishnan constituted the pentagon that created the mighty verbal edifice that is the Renaissance Novel in Malayalam. The novel had its reawakening in the forties. Like *Bālyakālasakhi*, *Ōṭayil Ninnə* is also rightly deemed an epoch-making novel. Dev's writing is noted for its vigorous and masculine style. The spirit of Dev revolted against the feudal and capitalist structures that held the large majority of the landless and the working class in chains. He fought for their liberation in his writings. In *Ōṭayil Ninnə* he presents a landless worker who earns a living for himself by hard work as the representative of the lower class gradually emerging into freedom. The hero Pappu, a rickshaw-puller, gives life and education to a poor girl and raises her to the middle-class level, he himself opting to remain where he belongs. *Ōṭayil Ninne* is short, but powerful. It has a labourer as its hero, who symbolizes the spirit of revolt against the social structures that imperilled human liberty. A prolific writer, as Dev was, some of his novels tended to be tracts on social liberty, but at his best, with his powerful style, his awareness of the modern human situation, and his deep sense of the need for social change, he is unequalled in his field. *Rowdy* (1958), *Naṭi* (The Actress, 1951), *Ulakka* (The Pestle, 1951), *Kaṇṇāṭi* (Mirror, 1961), *Prēma Viḍḍhi* (Love Crazy),

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Ennōṭṭə (Whither?, 1958) are effective as social criticism; but *Ōṭayil Ninnu*, *Bhṛāntālayam* (The Lunatic Asylum, 1949) and *Ayalkkār* (The Neighbours, 1963) excel these as works of fiction. The theme of *Bhṛāntālayam* is the communal riots that ripped the Indian fabric in the wake of partition. *Bhṛāntālayam* successfully brings out the irony of the situation and the immeasurable pathos of its tragedy. While *Ulakka* shows Dev as one infatuated with Marxism, most of his other novels give ample proof of his loyalty to the high humanist ideals of Gandhism. Gopinath in *Ōṭayil Ninnə* is a Gandhian. The figure of Gandhi emerges in tragic grandeur in *Bhṛāntālayam*. *Ayalkkār* is a full-fledged social novel throwing light on the evolution of Nairs, Ezhavas and Christians in a typical village of Kerala. The novel gives a masterly social analysis, and presents a number of memorable characters. Dev's sympathies are with the lower class; his major contribution to Malayalam novel consists in his having made it an effective medium of expression of the lower middle class in Kerala. His novels boosted their morale, infusing into them the courage and self-respect that they badly needed.

Thakazhi. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (Takaḷi Śivasaṅkara Piḷḷai, b. 1912), known in India and abroad, has much in common with Premchand, Yashpal and Mulk Raj Anand. He started writing novels in the thirties, but those early efforts did not succeed. His *Raṇṭiṭaṅṅaḷi* (Two Measures, 1948) was an immediate success. In the power of its treatment it equalled *Ōṭayil Ninnu* and *Bālyakālasakhi*, and like them elevated the Malayalam novel to the level of the fiction classics in Indian languages. *Raṇṭiṭaṅṅaḷi* treats the love of two men for a woman, and the love of the men for each other. Koran wins the love of Chirutha and marries her, but he has to kill the lustful son of his feudal lord, who attempts to molest his woman, and go to jail. Chathan, the steadfast friend as he is, takes care of Chirutha in Koran's absence. When Koran is released from jail he is reunited with his wife and his son who was born to him a few months after his arrest. The story has a universal appeal. What renders it unique is its social and cultural background and its powerful presentation of the class struggle. Koran, Chirutha and Chathan are *pulayas*, or *chaṇḍāḷas*, the lowest untouchables. They too have become self-conscious in the wake of India attaining independence. Under the leadership of the Marxist party, men like Koran launched their fight for liberation. *Raṇṭiṭaṅṅaḷi* won the attention of writers in the various Indian languages. Thakazhi was always moved by the plight of the depressed class, whether they were scavengers as in *Tōṭṭiyuṭe Makan* (Son of the Scavenger, 1948) or fishermen as in *Chemmeen* (Shrimps, 1956). The insatiable lust for money engendered and promoted by capitalism is one of the major themes of his novels, and in expiation of this social evil he feelingly portrays its victims. *Chemmeen* narrates a great love story, even as it paints the fisherman's affinity to the spirit of the sea, and presents the tragedy resulting from violating the moral order of nature. It is also the poignant tragedy of man's inordinate avarice for money. The last scene showing how Pazhani is engulfed by the sea chiefly because of the disloyalty of his wife Karuthamma, is matchless in Malayalam for its emotional impact. Thakazhi is also a prolific writer, basically of the socialist realist school. His novels include besides the ones mentioned above, *Talayōṭu* (The Skull, 1948), *Nurayum Patayum* (Foam and Froth, 1970), *Ēṇippaṭikaḷ* (Rungs of the Ladder, 1964) and *Kayar* (The Coir, 1978). As a full-length novel presenting life in all its dimensions *Ēṇippaṭikaḷ*, which depicts the rise of a middle-class Nair to the position of the Chief Secretary of Travancore and his subsequent fall, has won the acclaim of critics. Thakazhi is exceptionally good at bringing out the forces that shape society and suggesting ways of promoting social revolution. However, his initial enthusiasm for Marxism subsided gradually. Social criticism in itself seldom makes a readable novel. Thakazhi invariably incorporates it in the very texture of a romantic love tale and makes it not only palatable but effective. Love of woman and lust for power and wealth are the driving forces of man; and unless they are held in check, society will not advance, nor will man succeed in life. *Kayar* which runs to several hundred pages narrates man's relation to his landed property over several generations. Thakazhi has in the novel proved his capacity to introduce a host of characters in a large span of time like the masters of fiction in the West.

S. K. Pottekkat. Early in his literary career S. K. Pottekkat (Poṯṯekkāṭ, 1914–82) was inspired by Marxist ideals. However, never did he advocate the Marxist solution for the social problems of Kerala. He sympathized with the depressed classes and the have-nots and strongly pleaded for their uplift. The Hindu-Muslim riots that broke out in India in the wake of partition, moved his heart as shown in his moving tale *Mūṭupaṭaṁ* (The Veil, 1955). Pottekkat rebelled against all structures, religious, social and economic, that held man in fetters. In *Nāṭan Prēmam* (Country Romance, 1954) the novelist exposed the villainy and lust of the rich who exploited the innocent village girls. *Viṣa Kanyaka* (Poison Maiden, 1958) showed the ruthlessness of the landlords who employed the labour of the working class to acquire land in the virgin forests of Malabar. In it, the misery of the hopeless men and women who lose their lives in their final struggle with death is movingly told. Pottekkat is a poet, a travelogue writer, short-story writer and novelist all rolled into one. His *Teruviṅṇe Katha* (Story of Street, 1963) and *Oru Dēśattiṅṇe Katha* (Story of a Village, 1972) are voluminous works painting life in its plenitude. *Oru Dēśattiṅṇe Katha* which is considered the best work of Pottekkat won the Jnanpith Award for 1981. It is an autobiographical novel. It traces the

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development of a young man Sreedharan born and brought up in one of the villages of Kerala. The protagonist has his individuality; so also has every other character presented in the novel. The work is remarkable for its happy combination of humour and pathos, and lively portrayal of life in a typical village of Kerala. The landscapes are painted vividly, the characteristics of the different communities are highlighted, the drama of life with its conflicts and resolutions, with its colour and music, is forcefully presented. Pottekkat is fully aware of the evil forces in life, its contrasts and contradictions, its ironies and paradoxes. And yet he knows that evil never has the last say. Man is basically good, and virtue ultimately triumphs over evil. Pottekkat is also a great humanist. His style has all the sensitivity and inner resonance of lyrical poetry.

Uroob. The primary concern of the novelists of the renaissance was the uplift of the socially oppressed. They sought to wield fiction as an effective instrument to awaken the people to a social revolution. They saw life as a battlefield where men and women fought for economic freedom. There are critics who argue that the novel as a genre does not concern itself with the immensities of life or the obstinate questionings that perplex the human mind. But the works of the great masters of literature of the world disprove this contention. To Dev, the freedom of man was of vital importance. To Thakazhi, forces in nature and history have their roles to play in shaping human life. Basheer shows great capacity to unravel the mystery of life. Pottekkat considers man essentially good. And P. C. Kuttikrishnan (Kuṭṭikṛṣṇan; pseud.: Uṛūb, 1915–1979) presents man as a social and moral being with infinite aspirations and failures. To begin with he wrote short novels on the native humanity of the simple village-folk. Though basically good, man is confronted with evil. It needs the exercise of a powerful imagination to plumb the deep recesses of the human heart, to discover its mystery. *Ummāccu* (1954) by Uroob is a study of crime and punishment, of suffering and tolerance. Beeran outwitted Mayan and won the hand of Ummachu in marriage. Later the disappointed Mayan when he realized that he had been befooled by Beeran stole into Beeran's house at night and murdered the man. Not long afterwards he married Ummachu. When Abdu, Beeran's son by Ummachu, suspected Mayan of having murdered his father, Mayan quitted home. Conscience drove him to commit suicide. In an epilogue, it narrates how Abdu married Chinnammu, daughter of Ummachu's Hindu steward Chappunny Nair. Obviously the novel makes a plea for a harmonious relation between Hindus and Muslims. The plot of Ummachu is a bit shaky, but its characterization, especially of its heroine Ummachu, is superb. As an interpretation of life it ranks with the best works of fiction in any other Indian language. *Miṇṭāppeṇṇu* (The Dumb Girl, 1958) of Uroob draws sustenance from such conflicts as those between traditional and commercialist outlooks, and those between the rural attitude and the urban attitude to life. The all-suffering woman is a central character in Uroob's world of fiction; such are Kunju Lakshmi in *Miṇṭāppeṇṇu*, Ummachu in *Ummāccu* and Radha in *Sundarikaḷum Sundaranmārum* (The Beautiful and the Handsome, 1958). Only Devaki who died for her son in *Ayalkkār*, Suhra in *Bālyakālasakhi* and Kartyayani in *Ēṇippaṭikaḷ* equal them. *Ammiṇi* (1972) is a psychological study of a complex character who meets her death at the hands of her lover. Uroob's *Aṇiyara* (The Green Room, 1967) is a well constructed novel dealing with the problems of unfulfilled love. But his masterpiece is *Sundarikaḷum Sundaranmārum*. To Uroob life is a quest made by each man to realize his authentic self.

In every good novel there may be a character who reflects the 'alter ego' of the novelist. Such is Pappu in *Ōṭayil Ninnu*, Sreedharan in *Oru Dēśattiṅṭe Katha* and Chempan Kunju in *Chemmeen*. Uroob himself has admitted that Viswam, the hero of *Sundarikaḷum Sundaranmārum*, is his own alter ego. Born an orphan and brought up by the kindness of a schoolmaster, Raman Nair by name, Viswam sets out on a journey in quest of the end of the world which leads him first into an abode of wealth and romantic love, then to the coolness of the depth of the sea and finally into a realm of dispassionate acts and selfless love. The metamorphosis of Viswam is from the private self to the universal self that is in enery individual. Novels of such depth, which trace the evolution of a people, and the individuality of man over a period of three generations are not many in Indian literature. *Sundarikaḷum Sundaranmārum* foreshadowed the writing of such novels as *Nālukeṭṭu* of M. T. Vasudevan Nair, *Ayalkkār* of Dev, *Ēṇippaṭikaḷ* of Thakazhi, *Oru Dēśattinṭe Katha* of Pottekkat and *Ākāśattile Paṛavakaḷ* (The Birds of the Sky, 1980) of Parappurath.

Other Novelists. In this context, mention must be made of certain novels by other writers who too contributed in their own way to the development of the renaissance novel. *Oḷukkukaḷ* (The Currents, 1953) by Kainikkara Padmanabha Pillai, *Kontayil Ninnu Kuriśilēkku* (From the Rosary to the Cross, 1953) by Joseph Mundassery, *Jivikkān Maṛannu Pōya Stṛī* (The Woman Who Forgot to Live, 1952) by Vettoor Raman Nair, *Tōṭṭi*, (Scavenger, 1947) by Nagavally R. S. Kurup have their own merits to commend themselves. During this period Malayalam was dominated by different varieties of novels such as the social novel, the psychological novel and the 'stream-of-consciousness' novel in addition to the general type.

E. M. Kovoor (Kōvūr, 1906–82) gifted with a sense of humour and a deep insight into the social structure, presented the strength and weakness of the middle-class Christian community in his novels *Kāṭu* (The Forest 1964), *Koṭuṅṅi-*

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kaḷ (The Peaks, 1968) and *Malakaḷ* (The Hills, 1970). In *Guhā Jīvikaḷ* (The Cave-Dwellers, 1975) he described the alienation of the Keralites living abroad. G. Vivekanandan's *Kaḷḷiccellamma* (1965) depicts the life of a woman of the lower class who is driven to hardship by the ruthlessness of her own fellowmen in society. *Muttaśśi* (Grandmother, 1959), *Śanidaśa* (The Period of Saturn, 1959) and *Maṇṇiṅṭe Māṟil* (On the Chest of Earth, 1954) are good novels of the socialist realist school, written by Cherukadu who was an avowed Marxist. In *Maṇṇiṅṭe Māṟil* he shows how man is enslaved in the feudal set-up. Malayattoor Ramakrishnan has to his credit a number of novels, each of a different class; *Yakṣi* (Vampire, 1967) is a psychological novel. *Vēruka*ḷ (Roots, 1966) is noted for its nostalgia. His *Yantram* (The Machine, 1967) is a social novel in the great tradition set by Uroob and Thakazhi. It reveals the secrets of the working of the governmental machinery. Kovilan and Parappurath though generally considered novelists of army life like Nandanar, Vinayan and Ekalavyan are much more than that.

Credit goes to Ponjikkara Rafi (Pōṇṇikkara Rāfi, b. 1924) for having contributed to Malayalam a Proustian type of novel, adopting the stream-of-consciousness technique. It holds a mirror up to the working of the mind of a young boy. The language of Rafi has a rhythm of its own, and it is enriched with symbolism. His *Svargadūtan* (Messenger of Heaven, 1958) showed the way to many a novel of the stream-of-consciousness technique that was to spring forth in the language. The novels of K. Surendran (b. 1921) aimed at psychological realism rather than socialist realism. Surendran saw men and women as slaves of passion, victims of lust, ambition and greed, and yet humane. His *Tāḷam* (Rhythm, 1960), *Māya* (Illusion, 1961), *Kāṭṭu-kuraṅṅu* (Wild Monkey, 1952), *Śakti* (Power, 1970), *Maraṇam Durbalam* (Death is Weak, 1972) suggest that human life as experienced by each individual is a tussle between the ego and the super ego, between emotions and good sense. Surendran's understanding of the human mind is authentic. The novels of the first period such as *Indulēkha* and *Mārttāṇḍa Varma* and of the second period such as *Chemmeen* and *Sundarikaḷum Sundaranmārum* are to be deemed novels of the great tradition that affirm life and its great values. By the sixties a new breed of fiction, which may be described as the novel of new consciousness, emerged in Malayalam. This was in a measure necessitated by the changes that overtook the Indian society by the middle of the sixties.

Kovilan and Parappurath. The transformation into the new type of fiction was foreshadowed by the novels of Kovilan and Parappurath. They felt that the great traditional humanist values were to be sustained in order that humanity should survive. But in the emerging social milieu traditional values fostered by the rural communities were being repudiated. Both Parappurath (real name K. E. Mathai, 1925–82) and Kovilan (real name V. V. Ayyappan, b. 1923) had served in the army which in itself constituted a society different from the rural and urban societies with their own value system. Uprooted from the rural community, urban people lose their identity. They are dehumanized and nostalgically they long for the traditional values which are flouted in the new environment. *Niṇamaṇiṅṅa Kālppāṭukaḷ* (Bloodstained Footprints, 1955) and *Anvēṣiccu Kaṇṭettiyilla* (Sought, But not Found, 1958) paint the tragedy of the loss of values. In *Paṇitīrātta Viṭu* (Unfinished House, 1964) Parappurath bemoans the helplessness of a youth who fails in doing good to those whom he loves. *Aranāḻika Nēram* (Half an Hour Only, 1967) written in the stream-of-consciousness method portrays the deterioration of the family of a grand old man clinging in vain to the declining Christian values of his cultural milieu. Parappurath has brought out in 1980 *Ākāśattile Paṟavakaḷ* which describes the story of a village through two generations with a host of characters revolving round two dominating characters. This novel belongs to the great tradition.

In *A Minus B* (1958), *Tāḻvara* (The Valley, 1969) and *Ēḻāmeṭaṅṅaḷ* (The Wives, 1965) Kovilan shows how man is reduced to a thing in the army; a Jawan is nothing more than a particle of dust in the army, and soldiers die in thousands in war for want of forethought on the part of those at the helm of affairs. These novels marked a decisive turning point in the attitude of the novelists. In the early years of Independence India was registering remarkable progress at all points under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru. Then traditional values illumined by Gandhian ideals were treasured by most writers. Others had faith in a Marxist revolution that would sooner or later liberate the oppressed masses of the country. But in the sixties the situation changed. The Chinese aggression broke India's defence, at least partly. The Nehru Government weakened. Nepotism, bribery, contraband and corruption were rampant at all places, high and low. Gandhian idealism was trodden under foot. Commercialism flourished, opportunism was accepted as the most effective policy to achieve the desired ends. The values of the great tradition seemed to have lost their relevance in the national situation. Popular novelists live and write in sheer ignorance of this change in attitude, and there is a large number of them led by Muttathu Varkey, Kanam E. J., Moidu Padiyath, and others. A popular novelist delights in arousing the curiosity of the reader and sustaining it till the end. He is an entertainer and as such seldom arrogates to itself the task of value questioning. This is not to say that the more talented and self-conscious among them have not depicted their societies truthfully nor offered certain valid criticisms of the social structure. The works of S. K. Marar, Perumpadavam Sreedharan, G. N. Panikkar, Puthoor Unnikrishnan, George Onakkur, Sara Thomas, Joseph Vayittila, Pamman,

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V. T. Nandakumar, Ayyaneth, K. M. Joseph and T. K. C. Vaduthala are to be evaluated in this light. The novels of E. Vasu are noted for their presentation of the misery of the non-gazetted officers. There are novels written on a variety of themes, such as those from the Bible, the lives of doctors, labourers, soldiers, nurses, editors and so on. Most walks of life are covered, so also most regions of Kerala. There have been novels on a variety of themes, such as loneliness, boredom, hallucination and paranoia.

The Modern Period

The modern period in Malayalam fiction begins with the works of Kakkanadan. But one cannot take a direct leap into his works from the works of Uroob or Thakazhi without referring to the satires of N. P. Mohammed and V. K. N. (V. K. Narayanan Kutty) and the neo-romantic novels of M. T. Vasudevan Nair. The novels of N. P. Mohammed and V. K. N. are politically oriented. Mohammed's *Hiraṇyakaśipu* (1968) gives a convincing account of a modern dictator rising to power employing all techniques including the democratic methods. V. K. N.'s *Ārōhaṇam* (Ascending, 1969) and *Syndicate* (1970) are novels that satirize the political leaders who rise to power. Of his several novels *Pitāmahan* (The Paternal Grandfather, 1976) is deemed the best. Though set against the political backdrop of the erstwhile Cochin state, the story of Sir Chathu's rise to power satirizes the way opportunists achieve their ends under every set-up. V. K. N.'s satire is scathing.

M. T. Vasudevan Nair (Vāsudēvan Nāyar, b. 1933) started his literary career drawing inspiration from Uroob. His first major novel *Nālukeṭṭu* (traditional house with an inner courtyard, 1958) has much in common with Uroob's novels, in the construction of its plot, characterization and presentation of the social background on a wide canvas. The significant difference consists in the change in the attitude of the protagonist. Unlike Viswam who sets himself to build a world in a spirit of dispassionate service, Appu works as though with a vengeance against all those who oppressed him and seeks to rebuild a world of his own pattern. Govindan Kutty of *Asuravittu* (1962) ostracized by the community of his birth as well as the community he adopted returns to his village when it is scourged by plague. Out from the remnants of a perishing traditional community he hopes to build a society inspired by humanist ideals. Sethu of Vasudevan Nair's *Kālam* (Time, 1969) negates all the traditional values and accepts the commercial values of power, money and pleasure, though he is remorse-stricken in the process. In *Vilāpayātra* (Mourning Procession, 1978) M. T. Vasudevan Nair almost endorses the 'outsider-attitude' of Camus. His *Maññu* (The Snow, 1964) which reminds one of Kavabatha's *Snow Country* is a fine stream-of-consciousness novel. The anguish of a frustrated soul waiting for the flow of grace that never comes is delineated in it. Rajalakshmi who committed suicide when she was 34 wrote two novels of extreme delicacy and charm, poignant in their mood of desolation and despair. She was not for a negation of human values. But the cloud that bedimmed the sunshine of the earlier mood of optimism cast its shadow in her novels. Novels with social concern, novels pleading for social revolution, space-time novels and novels upholding the great human values continued to be produced.

Kovilan's *Tōṭṭaṅṅaḷ* (rustic songs in praise of a goddess, 1970) and *Bharatan* written in the stream-of-consciousness technique, Valsala's (b. 1938) *Nellu* (Paddy, 1972), *Āgnēyam* (Arrow of Fire, 1974), and *Niḷaluṟaṅṅunna Vaḷi* (The Way Where the Shadow Sleeps, 1975), Vilasini's (b. 1928) *Niramuḷḷa Niḷalukaḷ* (Colourful Shadows, 1965) are powerful social novels that suggest that such works have not lost their relevance in the modern situation. Novels like *Śaṅkṟānti* (1975) by A. P. Kulakkad point to the samet hing. M. Sukumaran's *Śēṣakṛiya* (Obsequies, 1980) is critical of the Marxist ideology he had followed till then. Vilasini's *Iṇaṅṅātta Kaṇṇikaḷ* (Unmatched Links, 1968) that illustrates the significance of the message of the Bhagavat Gita in private life, and P. K. Balakrishnan's (b. 1925) *Iniñān Uṟaṅṅaṭṭe* (Now Let Me Sleep, 1973) that reinstates the great values of life even as it reinterprets the Mahabharata, are novels of affirmation. But unlike the social novels of the great tradition the new novels are penetrated by a new sensibility. The focus of the novelist in these works is not as much on man's actions in society and social conditions as on the consciousness of man. The novels are by and large reflections of certain fields of consciousness. But unlike the modernist works that reject the values of the great tradition, they affirm them. It will therefore be a gross error if we characterize the sixties and the seventies which constitute the modern period as a period of the total negation of values. Various tendencies are simultaneously at work in the modern pluralist society. Whereas the majority flow with the general tide, the talented and the self-conscious among the writers have shifted from the novels of action and character to the novels of new consciousness. The modern novel does not set store by plot and character, rather it seeks to provide an adequate image or metaphor for some philosophy of life or a unique attitude to life, social, individual or psychological.

The Modern Situation

Such novels as *The Castle* and *The Trial* by Franz Kafka, and *The Outsider*, *Plague* and *Fall* by Camus had a great impact on the modern novelist. The novel of new consciousness was introduced into Malayalam by Kakkanadan (George Varghese Kākkanāṭan, b. 1935). Yuri Bondarev, the Russian critic, termed such works either novels of

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doubt or novels of negation. The American critic, Epstein, characterized them as the novels of new sensibility. In fact the novels of Herman Hesse, Sartre and Beckett are of this category. Sooner or later these works were to influence the Indian writers. The situation obtaining in the country in the sixties, some of them did feel, warranted a general revaluation of the traditional ways of thinking and writing. In *Uṣṇa Mēkhala* (The Torrid Zone, 1969), Kakkanadan introduced the protagonist of the new sensibility, Sivan, who, thoroughly disillusioned with the working of the Marxist Party grows into a self-exile with little or no faith in the traditional values. He suffers acute loneliness and anguish, but realizes that his malady has no cure. Kakkanadan's *Ajñatayuṭe Tāḷvara* (The Valley of Ignorance, 1972) presents man as living in the vale of unknowing, digging his own grave every minute of his existence. In *Ēḷām Mudra* (The Seventh Seal, 1968) he exposes the hollowness of Christian Pentecostalism. His *Vasūri* (Smallpox, 1968) reminds one of Camus' *Plague*, his *Kōḷi* (The Fowl, 1971) has something in common with Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. M. Mukundan (b. 1943) shares the honour with Kakkanadan as a progenitor of the modernist Malayalam novel. *Haridvāril Maṇi Muḷaṅṅunnu* (The Bell Chimes in Haridwar, 1974) is a metaphor of the excruciating agony of a self-exile, disillusioned with all traditional philosophies that affirm life. Mukundan's *Ī Lōkam Atiloru Manuṣyan* (This World and a Man in It, 1970) describes vividly the agony of a young man who has lost his grip on life. Every attempt he makes to plumb the depth of existence through his intimate association with the opposite sex meets with failure. His *Delhi* (1969) and *Mayyaḷipuḷayuṭe Tiraṅṅaḷil* (On the Banks of the River of Mahe, 1975) are both powerful novels emphasizing the absurdity of existence whether physical, quasi-metaphysical or even metaphysical. Neither Aravind of *Delhi* nor Das of *Mayyaḷipuḷayuṭe Tiraṅṅaḷil* can find a meaning or purpose in life. In the sixties we come across a number of novelists who seek to build images expressing the meaninglessness of life. C. Radhakrishnan's (Rādhākṛṣṇan, b. 1939) *Marīcika* (The Mirage) shows life as a mirage. Of Radhakrishnan's other works his *Ellām Māykkunna Kaṭal* (The Sea that Effaces Everything, 1972) and *Puḷa Mutal Puḷa Vare* (From River to River, 1974) are remarkable for their new sensibility.

Modern Novels. In *Aśvatthāmā* (1971) Madampu Kunjukuttan (Māṭampu Kuṉṉikuṭṭan, b. 1946) suggests that the chief protagonist of modern sensibility is neither Arjuna nor Krishna but Aswatthama—a perpetually wandering immortal leper filled with hate. The main character of Kunjukuttan's *Aśvatthāmā* makes nothing of his life. His *Bhraṣṭu* (Excommunication, 1973) and *Niṣādam* (1977) are expressive of the modernist sensibility. Padmarajan (Padmarājan, b. 1945) is of the view that man's dominant passions are lust and hate and that left to himself man will do everything in his power to gratify both. His *Nakṣatraṅṅaḷe Kāval* (O Stars, Witness Ye!, 1971) is just a social novel but his *Vāṭakaykoru Hṛdayam* (A Heart on Loan, 1975) and *Ita Iviṭe Vare* (Here, This Far, 1972) show how there has been a resurgence of lust and violence in the modern society. To Sethu (Sētu, b. 1941) man's prime desire is acquisition of money. In *Vanavāsam* (Forest Life, 1976) he shows how people abandon all values of life in order to acquire wealth. His *Pāṇḍavapuram* (1979) is built on a hallucination which displaces reality and occupies its realm. A woman deserted by her husband dreams of Pandavapuram, the land of philanderers and believes that she has had a liaison with a philanderer of the place. There are critics of the new school who consider Anand's (b. 1916) *Āḷkkūṭṭam* (The Crowd, 1970) and *Maraṇa Saṛṭifikeṭ* (Death Certificate, 1974) good pieces of fiction. *Maraṇa Saṛṭifikeṭ* is just a Kafkaesque novel describing the boredom and meaninglessness of modern existence in the urban area. A man makes repeated efforts to get the death certificate of his friend, without success. Sethu's *Tāḷiyōla* (Palmyra Leaves, 1977) and Karoor Sasi's *Tikaccum Vyaktiparam* (Fully Personal, 1976) are novels of the same type. *Āḷkkūṭṭam* is a voluminous work representing the lives of different types of people in an urban area like Bombay. It offers a rich variety of lives, and different attitudes to political, social and even philosophic problems. The situation obtaining in urban India is hardly conducive to anything productive or positive. The characters are all more sinned against than sinning. The novel fails in achieving its ambition to create a metaphor for the tragedy of the modern man. O. V. Vijayan's (b. 1931) *Khasākkiṇṭe Itihāsam* (The Epic of Khasak, 1969) on the other hand is an artistic success. However, it does not present to us a great vision of life. The novelist suggests that the modern man has lost his great vision of life. The protagonist of the novel, Ravi, a highly educated young man, is a seeker of his own identity and also the meaning of life. He comes to a village and starts a one-teacher school. The village with its history rich in folklore, its people consisting of Ezhavas and Muslims and its rich landscape gives the story a beautiful setting. Plague ravages this place and takes away the life of many a child. Ravi knows that individual life has no significance taken individually. Since human life is absurd, moral laws have no validity, neither has romance any relevance. Ravi has abandoned his father, his first love, showing that he is rootless. He is not bound by any law nor tethered to any place. He drinks and indulges in promiscuous sex. Finally he prepares to leave the village. As he stands at the bus-stop a snake comes out of its hole toward him and bites him. Life has no impact on Ravi, neither has death. *Khasākkiṇṭe Itihāsam* is a good modernist novel of the new sensibility.

The products of the third period of the Malayalam novel

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which begins by about 1960, are not solely novels of the new sensibility. In fact some of them are novels of affirmation and they eclipse most of the modernist works by their sheer brilliance. A close observation of the present-day scene in the literary front shows that both the traditional and the modernist trend are powerfully at work in the Kerala society. The present attempt is to blend the best of the great tradition with the best of the new sensibility in works of fiction. It should be mentioned to the credit of Punattil Kunhabdulla (Kuññabduḷḷa, b. 1941) that in his *Smāraka Śilakaḷ* (Memorial Stones, 1977) he has been able to accomplish this feat. It narrates the story of a powerful Muslim feudal lord Pookkoya Thangal whose character is an admixture of lust, violence and charity, the three passions of the human heart nurtured by feudalism. The life of the Muslim community is centred on his personality and on the cemetery of the Muslim mosque with its association of many lives lived in the community. Kunhabdulla portrays a variety of people cast around Pookkoya Thangal. As Thangal is killed, the feudal set-up degenerates into despotism which necessitates a revolution in the society. The novel shows that such a revolution may not be far behind. Though the work reflects many of the aspects of the great tradition in the evocation of the past, and in its delineation of the development of the sensibility of Kunjali, it vies with the modernist novels as a work of the new sensibility. The decadent has to depart, a new order is to be established, a new sensibility has to develop blending the old and the new.

The Malayalam novel continues its march forward. It is neither in want of new themes nor is it unacquainted with new techniques of expression. Modern psychology is sure to open a new field of writing to the Malayalam novelists who are already familiar with the novels of obsessional neurosis, paranoia and schizophrenia produced in the West. C. Radhakrishnan in *Svapna Paramparā* (Series of Dreams, 1976) and Karoor Sasi in *Metiyaṭkkunnu* (1976) have had a try at the novel of schizophrenia and paranoia respectively. Vilasini's *Avakāśikaḷ* (The Heirs, 1980) which runs into four big volumes employs the stream-of-consciousness technique. The novel is narrated from the points of view of different characters. As a stupendous work of sustained inspiration encompassing myriad thoughts, feelings and impressions, *Avakāśikaḷ* claims a unique position in Malayalam literature.

Urbanization and industrialization have had their impact on the consciousness of the novelist. The repercussions of the staggering inventions of science and technology as evident in the writings of American novelists have not been experienced by the Indian mind yet. Existentialism and modernism continue to hold their appeal for the younger writers. However, we may not pass the verdict that contemporary fiction in Malayalam is basically modernist. Like the rest of the Indian society, Kerala society is also in a nascent and evolving state. Its roots are deep down in the humanist, rural culture of India. It absorbs novel trends, ideas and sensibilities, but is never swept off its moorings. It is basically humanist.

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Marathi

M. D. HATKANAGLEKAR

Early Beginnings (1850–77)

The novel form may be modern but the prototype is quite ancient. The interest to tell stories and to listen to them is characteristic of mankind. The Vedic tales contain the wonderful experiences which the ancient Indians had of the powers of Nature. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, their epics, present their ideals of life. Fascination for the mysterious and depiction of the ideal remain the distinctive features of early narrative literature. Even the tales written for pure entertainment reveal these features. The *Brihatkathāmañjari* of Gunadhya and the *Brihatkathāsaritsāgar* of Somdeva are typical examples. In the Marathi language narrative literature was produced, both in prose and verse, in the 12th century. In 1318, Maharashtra came under Muslim rule and for the next three centuries the Marathi language and literature fell on evil days. Their rejuvenation came only with the freedom won for the region by Sivaji, who reinstated the language by making it the medium of administration. Marathi achieved further dignity with the inflow of Sanskrit words. It is probable that not all the writing done during those centuries has come down to us.

If the social life of the period had not been disturbed by political upheavals, its narrative writings would have evolved into the form of the novel, with suitable developments of style and technique, of social and contemporary relevance. Kusumavati Deshpande, in her account of the Marathi novel, *Marāṭhī Kādambarī: Pahilē Śatak 1850–1950* (The Marathi Novel: The First Century 1850–1950) says that even without the great models of English literature the native loose narrative forms would have, under congenial social and political circumstances, developed into the proper form of the novel.

This view, however, fails to find support among the majority of critics who attribute the development of the form to the introduction of English education in the country, the encouragement given by the British rulers, the inspiration provided by English literary works, the development of the art of printing and the natural aspiration of the people for change and reform. The Marathi novel shows very tenuous connections, if any, with the traditional romantic and moral tales. Indigenous models like *Brihatkathā* or *Vetālapañcavimśatī* cannot claim to have fostered the Marathi novel.

The British rule influenced Marathi literature in two ways: first, through the preachings and publications of Christian missionaries; and, second, through the works of such liberal thinkers as Mill and Spencer. The Marathi social novel owes a debt of gratitude to the latter.

For well over a century, the Marathi novel has been growing steadily. In Marathi, it is called *Kādambarī*, after a famous Sanskrit narrative named after its heroine. Though the name is thus in a way indigenous, the conception is undoubtedly western. It is the same as the English novel. For some time, the Marathi 'Kādambarī' was called 'Nāval' after the English word. The name 'Kādambarī' dates back to 1830, though it is not known to what book it was first attached. The word signified an imaginary story.

The claim of *Yamunā Paryaṭan*, written by Baba Padmanji in 1857, as the first Marathi novel, is generally accepted. Hari Kesavji, Baba Padmanji, Lakshmanshastri Halbe, R. B. Gunjikar and M. K. Vijayakar made the novel form distinct and popular, giving it a solid foundation. Then under the remarkable narrative genius of Hari Narayan Apte (Harī Nārāyaṇ Āpṭe, 1864–1919), the form matured in an unprecedented way. It is interesting to note that in spite of his original genius, Hari Narayan Apte started with what would have been an adaptation of Reynold's *Mysteries of Old London*, but he soon parted company with this type of English novel, and proceeded to write the first major 'social' novel in Marathi, *Madhlī Sthitī*. Claims are also advanced in favour of *Muktāmālā*, written by Lakshmanshastri Halbe in 1861, as being the first regular piece of fiction in Marathi as it incorporates several important ingredients of the novel form. This claim, however, is not strong. *Mochangad* (the name of a fort, 1871) written by R. B. Gunjikar (Gunjīkar, 1843–1901), is regarded as the first historical novel. These first specimens had their antecedents in certain translated stories like *Yātrik Kramaṇ* by Harikesavji (Harī Keśavjī, 1804–1858) which was a translation of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.

It is possible that *Yamunā Paryaṭan* did not receive its due recognition because it was written by a convert Christian. The novel appeared in 1857. Three years prior to it, the author, at the age of twenty-three, had embraced Christianity. The story is imaginary but it has a contemporary social content. Vinayak Rao and Yamuna are a Hindu husband and wife. They come to believe the tenets of Christianity and embrace it in due course. Vinayak Rao dies in an accident and Yamuna is widowed. She spends her later years as a humble servant of Christ. The novel was a bold attempt to express views against Hinduism and in favour of Christianity, to describe the disgrace to which Hindu womanhood

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is subjected and to advocate the remarriage of widows. The novel has a significant subtitle: 'Hindusthānātīl Vidhvāncyā Sthitīchē Nirūpaṇ' (An Elucidation of the Condition of Widows in India). It is a dual journey that Yamuna undertakes and completes. She travels to different holy places, and also from Hinduism to Christianity. An original imaginative story, superficial characterization and an artificial style stand out as the main features of this first Marathi novel. Probably these were acceptable to the contemporary readers. A passionate awareness of the suffering of a particular class in society is the essence of this novel. The problem which the novel dealt with was not particular to the Christian community; it had a much wider relevance. It also reminds us of the social ferment that had already started in Maharashtra. The ferment was to grow stronger with the years, and was to be one of the major urges behind 'modern' literature.

Yamunā Paryaṭan held the promise of Hari Narayan Apte's fictional wealth. It was not taken note of, for various reasons, by contemporary Maharashtra, which enjoyed pseudo-romantic, verbose fiction of the type represented by *Muktāmālā* (1861) of Laxman Moreswarashastri Halbe (1831–1905). The diction of the novel was Sanskrit-based, though genuinely native in some ways; and it modelled itself on Sanskrit literary works. It provides a sharp contrast to the somewhat Anglicized style of *Yamunā Paryaṭan*, smacking of translation. The remarks in the preface to *Muktāmālā* clearly bring out the intention of the author. 'I have composed this work so that people should develop a taste for reading books in their own language. The subject of the work is didactic and ethical, and can afford delight to the readers.' The moral of the story was predetermined. According to it, those who kept to the moral path would have all their calamities resolved and achieve happiness.

N. S. Risbud's *Mañjughoṣā* (1868) was an exact replica of *Muktāmālā*, of which six editions were published by 1890. Its story presents a long line of calamities, escapades and coincidences. This line of novels cast in the romantic mould continued up to the turn of the century. It was frankly romantic and grossly artificial. It was much to the taste of the comfortable, idle upper class living in an age of order and peace brought in by the British rule. The nature of the subject is fully expressed in the very titles of some of these novels: *Madan Mañjarī, Śṛṅgār Mañjarī, Madanbāṇ Āṇī Puṣpāvatī*. They refer to the god of love, and signify erotic love. A complaint was made by K. B. Marathe in 1872 that 'the pestilence of the novels was spreading dangerously'. Along with the novels of this kind, a beginning was made of the social novels such as *Kāḷpuruṣa* (The God of Death, 1886), *Nāhic Nā Aikāyace* (Won't You Listen?, 1892), where a blend was effected of everyday life and the adventurous and romantic. The most notable specimen of this trend was M. V. Rahalkar's *Nārāyaṇrāo Āṇī Godāvarī* (1884). Some critics acclaim this as the first original 'social' novel in Marathi.

M. G. Ranade (Rānaḍe 1848–1901) in his 'Second Survey of Marathi Literature' published in 1898 made the following observation: 'Marathi works of fiction may be divided into two classes. One being pure fiction, untrammelled by time, place or circumstance, and the other class is of the nature of historical novels... being intended to represent the modern conditions of life in all their variety and confusion. Of the first kind, the best specimens are *Mañjughoṣā, Muktāmālā, Nārāyaṇrāo Āṇī Godāvarī*. The best specimens of the second class are furnished by the writings of Nageshrao Bapat and Hari Narayan Apte'. It is obvious that Ranade uses the word 'historical' in the sense of 'social'.

In the first three decades of its existence, the Marathi novel was under the influence of the narrative models in three languages—English, Persian and Sanskrit. It showed two tendencies of perennial validity: romantic and entertaining on the one hand, and socially idealistic on the other. It appears that Baba Padamanji and Halbe Sastri evolved a genre in Marathi which was an indirect imitation of the fiction models in the English language and which at the same time retained its contacts with the conventions of the Sanskrit and Persian narrative models.

As stated earlier, *Mochangaḍ* by R. B. Gunjikar, was the first historical novel. Sir Walter Scott and Alexander Dumas served as inspiration for the effort. The nature of *Mochangaḍ* is both fictional and historical and does not appeal to the patriotic feeling. Yet it has certain features which point to the full-fledged historical novel later developed by Hari Narayan Apte.

A good many translated novels were published around this time: *Thagācī Jabānī* (1888), *Śīlāditya* (1879), *Anāth Paṇḍuraṇg* and *Mathurā* from the English, and *Śri Śiva Chatrapatī* (1893) and *Durgēśnandinī* (1898) from the Bengali.

The Modern Novel

The Genius of Hari Narayan Apte. In a way some of this was like a kind of spade-work done for the emergence of Hari Narayan Apte as a historical novelist in 1890. Conditions outside were favourable for the evocation of the patriotic sentiment. In Maharashtra, the reformist zeal lost its vitality after the death of Gopal Ganesh Agarkar. Eruptions of communal riots were frequent. Public celebrations of Ganesh festivals were started on a wide scale. The famine conditions of 1896 were followed by the plague. Colonel Rand was assassinated in Poona, and Lokmanya Tilak was tried for treason. Nilkanthrao Kirtane and M. G. Ranade submitted to the public authentic sources of the history of the Marathas. Ranade published his book *The Rise of the Maratha Power*. Hari Narayan Apte was close

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to these scholars and events, and from 1895 onwards began to write his series of historical novels, consisting of five novels on the life and age of Shivaji the Great: *Uṣākkāl*, *Gad Ālā Paṇ Sinha Gelā*, *Mādhyānha*, *Sūryodaya*, *Sūryagrahaṇ*; one on the history of the Rajputs: *Rūpnagaracī Rājkanyā*; one on the age of Chandragupta and another on the Vijayanagara empire: *Candragupta* and *Kālkūt*, and *Vajrāghāt*. These historical novels are both spirited and artistic. In them history is brought to vivid life, and historical and fictional characters are portrayed in a convincing manner.

Uṣākkāl (The Dawn, 1895–97) is the most popular of Apte's historical novels on Shivaji. The hero of this novel is Nanasaheb, son of Rangrao Appa, Chief of the Sultangad Fort. His character provides relief to the character of Shivaji, though both represent the rising generation of the Marathas. How respectable Maratha families were at the mercy of the Muslim is clearly traced by Apte in the account of the Deshmukh family. With equal vigour and vividness, Apte had delineated the basic faith inspiring the simple-minded Maratha youths to rally under a banner: the faith which produced their unstinted loyalty towards their leader.

Another outstanding novel *Sūryodaya* (Sunrise, 1905–08), relates the account of Afzulkhan's treacherous attack on Shivaji. The story is better organized than that of *Uṣākkāl*, while *Vajrāghāt* (Thunderbolt, 1913–16) is a still more perfect work of historical fiction. It concentrates on the portrayal of characters. The 'Thunderbolt', descended on the Vijayanagar empire during the reign of Ramaraja; but this is used only as a bakdrop by the novelist. The real thunderbolt is shown to descend on the personal lives of the principal characters—Ramaraja, Meherjan and Ranadullakhan. The inner conflicts of these characters which form the main subject of the novel has been dealt with in a skilful manner and in a poetic and dignified style.

In the wake of Apte's historical series, many journals like *Manorañjan* and publishing companies like the Surasgranthmala, the Sarasvanmayamala, the Bharatgaurav Granthmala, Hind Agency, One-Anna Series, Four-Anna Series, etc. were started. A host of novelists sprang up who drew their strength and resources from different periods of history. Nathmadhav, C. V. Vaidya, S. M. Paranjape were some of the noteworthy names among them.

The rise of Apte in the world of the Marathi novel was meteoric. No other Marathi novelist till his time, and very few since then, have shown the power to appeal to and exercise the whole gamut of mental energies. He possesses two undeniable gifts. He seizes hold of the basic human instincts and analyzes them in a realistic manner. And he is able to present this understanding of the complexities of human nature through very vivid and vital characters. It is through the accounts of the lives of such characters that he is able to weave the web of human existence as such and make his readers listen to the 'still, sad music of humanity'.

As stated earlier, Apte started to make an adaptation of Reynold's *Mysteries of Old London*, but soon realized his own powers and gave up the adaptation. He then produced a series of original novels beginning with *Madhlī Sthitī* (1885). During the period from 1885 to 1917, he produced a total of 22 novels, some of them social, and the others historical. The same period saw Hari Narayan Apte's three historical and five social novels; Nathmadhav's three historical and 12 social novels; while writers like Kashibai Kanitkar, C. V. Vaidya, Tatya Neminath Pangal, V. G. Apte and 'Dhanurdhārī' (Rāmacandra V. Ṭikekar) published one or two novels each.

Hari Narayan Apte depicted in his novels the social history of Maharashtra in this period. His social sympathies steadily widened, and his artistic insights and abilities also developed. As a result, the relevance and vitality of the social content of his novels also increased. In *Gaṇpatrāo* (1887–88) he brought to light the privations of an intelligent woman like Godavari on account of the ill-treatment meted out to her by her mother-in-law. *Paṇ Lakṣāt Koṇ Gheto* (But Who Takes Heed, 1893) is not merely a novel about the problem of child-widows in a Hindu society nor about any other abstract social problem. It also places before the reader, in the heroine Yamu, a human figure of flesh and blood, laughing and tripping, playing and quarrelling. The novel reveals middle class life and characters in a perfect blend. It proves that no work of art which is capable of bringing solace to the human heart can be created without profound sympathy for the human condition. In the celebrated character of Shankarmamanji, Yamu's father-in-law, Apte exposes the compulsions of religious conservatism, and the traditional modes of a middle-class Hindu householder. The liberals and the revolutionaries, the idealists and the pragmatists, the traditionalists and the modern, the virtuous and the villainous, the common and the uncommon—all these find a place collectively and individually in the panorama of social life depicted in his novels. He does not discuss these problems, but rather presents the broad spectrum of life churned up and transformed by these pressures. That is why his characters have become convincing and memorable. Shankarmamanji in *Paṇ Lakṣāt Koṇ Gheto*, Umabai and Maisaheb in *Yaśvantrāo Khare*, Sridharpant, Satyabhamabai and Gangabai in *Mī* (I, 1893–95), Sivarampant and Tai in *Bhayaṇkar Divya* are well remembered by readers.

Hari Narayan Apte carried Marathi fiction beyond simple didacticism into the sphere of art. He showed how to write about real life and living characters. The real life was physically confined to the Hindu middle-class society of his day, but his depiction of this society was profound.

From V. M. Joshi to N. S. Phadke

The next stage of development is connected with the novels

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of Vaman Malhar Joshi (Vāman Malhār Jośī, 1882–1943). His first novel *Rāgiṇī* (1916) appeared before Apte concluded his career as a novelist. Joshi added a new dimension to the Marathi novel, that of psychological interest. He respected rational and ethical values more than the purely aesthetic ones. By this time the status of women had advanced a little. Women's education was spreading. The age for marriage had increased. It was obvious to those who were concerned with social good that the traditional Hindu society was male-dominated. In England, the suffragette movement was gaining strength. In short, women were becoming more and more conscious of their rights and privileges. The heroine of *Rāgiṇī*, bearing the same name herself, was a product of this environment. Uttara was her antithesis. In this novel, Joshi anticipated the future development of the Indian woman as a result of the interaction between her traditional character and the western ideas and influences to which she was being exposed. This factor was probably responsible for the inordinate space given to theoretical discussions in the novel. The novel presents more of an analysis of life rather than life itself; and this is a general, and just, charge against Joshi's novels.

The promise of *Rāgiṇī* was fulfilled by the other five novels of Joshi. Of these *Suśīlecā Deva* (Susila's God, 1930) is considered to be his best. It presents a study of the intellectual development of the new, educated Hindu woman. Here also, Joshi, in an effort to explain the development of Susila, has brought in sustained discussions bristling with philosophical arguments regarding the evolution of the concept of God. Joshi believes not so much in the welfare of the community as in the development of individual personality. His novels mark the advance from a simple presentation of characters to an interest in their inner development, and from bare description of social conditions to their analysis. Though the organization of material in his novels leaves much to be desired, he evinces a great awareness of the complexities of human character. His faith in individualism, however, prevented him from achieving a deeper social analysis.

S. V. Ketkar (Ketkar, 1884–1937), the compiler of the first Marathi encyclopaedia was, first and foremost, a sociologist. He wrote novels only later in his career. His first novel *Goṇḍvanātīl Priyamvada* (Priyamvada of the Gondvana) was published in 1926; so was *Parāgandā* (Absconder). The latter deals with the problem of educated Indians wishing to settle abroad. Other novels are *Āśāvādī* (The Optimist, 1927), *Gāvsāsū* (Mother-in-Law of the Town, 1930) and *Brāhmaṇkanyā* (Brahmin Girl, 1930). The last, the most carefully written among his novels, created a sensation as it dealt with the future of the progeny of prostitutes. His last *Vicakṣaṇā* (Inquiry, 1937) appeared after his death. *Bhaṭkyā* (Wanderer, 1938), is incomplete. Ketkar as a novelist was unconventional in many ways. He was indifferent to the established ways of form and style and composed his novels out of unpromising material and improbable plots. He shocked the common reader with his clumsy literary manners and the better reader with his contradictions. His blatant caricatures of respected figures like the historian Rajwade and the revolutionary Lala Lajpatrai were not in good taste. But there is no denying the fact that Ketkar brought an unusual intellectual boldness to novel writing. Between the efforts of Ketkar and V. M. Joshi, the Marathi novel attained a dignity which exposed the limitations of contemporary popular fiction.

In the stream of social novels there were writers like 'Dhanurdhārī' with his novels, *Vāīkar Bhaṭajī* (1898) and *Pirājī Pāṭīl* (1903); Kasibai Kanitkar, with her *Raṅgrāo* (1903) and *Pālkhīcā Goṇḍā* (1928); Nathmadhav (D. M. Pitale) with *Ḍākṭar Kādambarī* (1918–20 in three volumes) and *Vihaṇgvṛṇda* (1915); N. H. Apte with *Pahāṇṭepurvīcā Kāḷokh* (1926) and *Na Paṭṇārī Goṣṭa* (1923). N. V. Kulkarni continued with his series of domestic novels for quite some time. V. V. Hadap, in his early novels, dwelt on some scandals in high places, but later turned his attention to a series of historical novels on the regime of the Peshwas. D. A. Tuljapurkar's *Māze Rāmāyaṇ* (1927) was a fictional portmanteau in which he dealt with all kinds of social problems. This novel was a bridge joining the novels of Hari Narayan Apte to those of V. M. Joshi and S. V. Ketkar. Bhargavram Vitthal (Mama) Varerkar (1883–1964) was a piquant personality whose life and literary career spanned an extensive period. His major reputation was that of a dramatist, but he became a prolific writer of fiction, piling up an impressive list of 115 novels. *Vidhavā Kumārī* (1928) recalled H. N. Apte's *Paṇ Lakṣāt Koṇ Gheto* with its subject, the child-widow. But the widow in Varerkar's novel rebels, as do several of his heroines. The writer's pseudonym for the novel, 'Ek Gatabhartṛkā' (A Widow) had misled even some leading literary figures before the writer revealed his identity. *Dhāvatā Dhoṭā* (1933) was another notable effort in which the life of industrial workers was depicted. This is acknowledged to be the first attempt in Marathi at writing a political novel. The beginnings of modern realism are seen in Varerkar's novels. Another notable achievement of Varerkar was his 58 translations of novels from Bengali; those from Sarat Chandra Chatterji show consummate ease. Varerkar took up the cause of the underdog. Most of the time, these were women, but his women characters are seen to be unusually aggressive. They provide a refreshing contrast to the sentimental pictures of the weaker sex as depicted in the majority of Marathi fiction. Another major translator of Bengali fiction was Vasudeo Govind Apte (Vāsudev Govind Āpṭe, 1871–1930) who rendered the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterji, besides a few English ones, into Marathi.

The account of Marathi fiction up to this point shows four stages. In the first stage starting from 1850, the beginning of the Marathi novel was made in the form of trans-

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lations and adaptations of assorted narrative models. *Yamunā Paryaṭan* gave a social bias to it; Halabe and Risbud lent it the dimension of romance and entertainment, and also a measure of form and style. From this stage, two distinct trends, one of social concern and the other of artistic bias, are found. They blend in the novels of Hari Narayan Apte. In him the Marathi novel achieved popularity, effectiveness and social significance of the highest order. After him—from 1910 roughly—it began to lose much of its vitality as it became didactic and insipid. However, at the same time a new wave of reflective fiction was gathering substance in the efforts of V. M. Joshi and S. V. Ketkar.

In the period after 1925, the Marathi novel became plentiful in number, as also rich and variegated in subject-matter and style. N. S. Phadke, V. S. Khandekar, G. T. Madkholkar, P. Y. Despande, Sane Guruji, Y. G. Josi, R. Y. Dighe, V. V. Bokil, Vibhavari Sirurkar, S. N. Pendse, Ranajit Desai enriched Marathi fiction. They extended the scope of its subject-matter, made it more substantial, precise, relevant and meaningful. The trends in English fiction after World War the First, the leftist policies, the different schools of thought,—hedonistic, materialistic, spiritual, psychological—some of them advocating the satisfaction of natural desires—began to influence the temper and disposition of the Marathi novelists. The preaching of social reforms was forgotten.

The Age of Phadke and Khandekar

For years and years after 1925, mainly two novelists, N. S. Phadke (Phaḍke, 1894–1978) and V. S. Khandekar ruled over the realm of Marathi fiction. In a broad sense, the former was identified with the creed of art for art's sake, and the latter with the creed of art for life's sake. Phadke developed as an immaculate craftsman. The plots of his novels were constructed and unfolded effectively and entertainingly. He developed a graceful and lucid prose style which has remained his valued contribution to the Marathi novel. Some feel, however, that since his day, there has been an unhealthy emphasis on style. Phadke, in the course of his long career as a novelist, perfected an infallible formula for writing fiction as cultured entertainment. V. S. Khandekar came upon the scene a little later, challenged this formula with his own amorphous one, in which middle-class idealism was a strong element. The young people in his novels were seen to be very earnest about social and political tasks and spoke eloquently about them. These two novelists continued to write as perfect contrasts and complements to each other in satisfying the emotional needs of the Marathi readers for well over a quarter of a century.

Phadke's career proper commenced in 1925, though in 1917, he had published a novel, *Allāh Ho Akbar*. This novel and a story he wrote at the age of twelve hark back to the fiction of adventure in *Muktāmālā*. It is significant that Phadke's first novel should possess a historical setting. However, his first novel in the true Phadke manner was *Kulābyācī Dāṇḍī* (The Kulaba Lighthouse, 1925). On his own admission, this was deliberately and purposefully moulded on the model of the well-made novels like *Love and Mr. Lewisham* written by H. G. Wells. The overt intention was to bring the 'facility and flexibility' of the style of English fiction into Marathi. It is significant that he persisted with this concern for style through almost 75 novels.

Jādūgār (Magician, 1928) tells the story of a beautiful young girl Indumati, who, generally ill-disposed to the opposite sex, feels attracted towards a young man, and goes through—not a process of mental conflicts and adjustments—some interesting situations. Indumati, and the artist hero Anandarao, finally overcome the initial emotional distance between them. This process has been presented skilfully through a series of well-contrived sweet coincidences. The novel reveals a precision and an ease hitherto not found in the Marathi novel. Descriptions of nature are made an integral part of the fictional design. The second novel, *Daulat* (Treasure, 1929), is another story of love. The theme is the contrast between material wealth and the treasures of an honest heart. The slight element of mystery employed in these two novels is given larger scope and turned to greater dramatic advantage in Phadke's novel, *Aṭkepār* (Beyond the Frontier, 1931). Nature also is beautifully exploited in this novel. *Nirañjan* (1932), *Āśā* (1937), *Pravāsī* (Traveller, 1937), *Samarbhūmi* (Battlefield, 1938), too are stories of love, but they are given an interesting backdrop of political events which lend them a new flavour. Of these, *Pravāsī* succeeds in rising a little above the novel of mere elegance and skill. *Uddhār* (Uplift, 1935), *Pratijñā* (Resolution, 1942), *Indradhanuśya* (Rainbow, 1941), *Unmād* (Arrogance, 1940) are put, more or less, in the same mould. *Akherce Baṇḍ* (The Final Revolt, 2nd ed., 1944) is a vaguely disguised fictional account of the life of the legendary Marathi stage actor, Bal-Gandharva. The succession of novels produced by Phadke in later years with his facile techniques added little to the quality of his achievement. Some said, not without justification, that Phadke kept on writing the same novel again and again. In spite of these serious limitations he continued to enjoy the love and confidence of a large majority of Marathi readers.

With the spread of women's education, Maharashtrian society could see the possibility of marriage after companionship. Companionship of man and woman opened up a long vista of romantic potential of unexpected meetings, friendship and love. In his long and cherished career as a novelist, Phadke kept on perambulating along this vista studded with familiar landmarks. He did not have any profound experience of life to reveal, and so his artistic gifts were expended on this material.

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Phadke either ignored the real problems or dealt with them in a casual way. That was why, though living in an age of frustration, he failed to write anything which was genuinely tragic. He created a cozy world of his own with its music, sports, dinner parties, smart ladies and lovely nature—which charmed the readers away, for short spells of time, from the drabness of actual existence, and was accepted as a spokesman of the cultured, upper middle-class society. His novels were regarded by this class, as also by his fans, as purveyors of what they thought was 'pure joy'.

Phadke established a new mode of presenting his characters, making use of the modern theories of psychology. As he was an accomplished literary artist, he employed with greater skill and elegance, than any other Marathi novelist, the gestures and mannerisms of a person for the portrayal of his charactes. His other admirable gift was a flair for writing easy-flowing and unaffected dialogues. In fact, a highly compact and well-organized mode of writing novels and a prose style which is lucid, elegant, precise and firm will remain as his permanent contribution to Marathi fiction.

Vishnu Sakharam Khandekar (Viṣṇu Sakhārāma Khāṇḍekar, 1898–1976), who was equally prolific as a writer, did not write as many novels as Phadke did, but his last novel *Yayāti* (1959) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1960 and the Jnanpith Award in 1974. He wrote short stories, allegories, personal essays, criticism and stories for the screen but valued his short stories most. He believed, as he said, 'in serving life through his art as a writer'. He was a keen observer of the social scene. Being sensitive, he was pained by the social distances and distinctions. It was the poor children, whom he taught in the school at Shiroda, an obscure village in South Konkan, who must have strengthened his awareness of social inequalities. He participated in Mahatma Gandhi's salt satyagraha and was deeply impressed by the Gandhian ideals of truth, sacrifice and simplicity. Socialistic ideals and Gandhian ways inspired his stories and novels.

Khandekar's first novel *Kānchanmṛga* (The Golden Deer, 1931) treats the theme of the material and spiritual distance between the cities and the villages. Sudhakar, the hero of the novel, goes to a village as a teacher with a desire to bring about a change in the village society. He falls in love with Sudha, a widow and bravely faces hostile attitudes and surroundings. Cities are the dress of Mother India, while villages are the bones. To seek the former and neglect the latter would be like going after the elusive golden deer, as Sita did in Ramayana: this was the moral of the book. *Ulkā* (1934) is a variation on the same theme. Bhausaheb, the father of the heroine Ulka, is again a teacher-idealist who infuses his own idealism into the daughter, who, in turn flames like a meteor. The novel exposed the gross materialism of the newly rising middle-class industrialists in Maharashtra. Bhausaheb feels gradually disillusioned in his efforts to enlighten the masses. *Don Dhruva* (The Two Poles, 1934) was a more important commentary on the social scene. The story is about the conflict in marriage between the dramatist Ramakant, handsome and a worshipper of beauty, and his plain-looking wife, Vatsala. Ramakant's attraction for the actress Suranga forces Vatsala to leave the house and become a worker in a cashew-nut factory. Here the realities of working class life are revealed to her. She spurns the offer of her repentant husband and casts her lot with these workers. An interesting part of the story is the way in which the inadequacies of the Gandhian concepts of ahimsa are brought home. The novel *Pāṇḍhare Ḍhag* (White Clouds, 1939) was written in the period of disillusionment experienced after 1934, and the mood of despair which culminated in the Second World War. 'White clouds' stand as a symbol of the attractive but delusive ideals of the middle-class intellectuals. The hero, Abhay, is fearless, and represents the new generation that has realized a new awakening and refuses to be satisfied with the vain slogan-mongering of the so-called idealists. *Krouncvadha* (The Killing of the Crounch Bird, 1942), dedicated to Ernest Toller and Stefan Zweig, brings out the tragic contrast between poetry and action, indulgence and renunciation, intelligence and sentiment and makes a case for a proper blending of the two. Excess of individualism leads to excess of indulgence and lust for power. The novel *Yayāti* carries this analysis into the field of individual psychology. It exposes the range of sensuality and carnal pleasure which science has brought within such an easy reach of the common man as never before in human history. Yayati represents the common man who would stop at nothing to buy his pleasures. Kacha is his antithesis with his lofty ideal of service. He represents the new man with a fully developed soul who can curb his passions with restraint and self-denial. The mythical story of Yayati is given a modern significance with its characters, Yayati, Kacha, Devayani and Sharmishta, projected as archetypes of permanent human tendencies.

The 'poetic' style of two distinguished dramatists, S. K. Kolhatkar and Ram Ganesh Gadkar, and the reformist urge of G. G. Agarkar, together with the social outlook developed by Hari Narayan Apte, collectively shaped the ideals and temperament of Khandekar. These were expressed in his steady stream of novels. The period between 1930 and 1942 was the period of his glory and best achievement. He was a poet at heart, and could respond to the sense of despair in the social life of his day. This was the reason for his popularity as a novelist at a time when Phadke was the darling of the fiction-loving public, feeding them with his own kind of delicious fare. As against this, Khandekar's shortcomings as a novelist are many: loose narrative, flat characters, a uniformly exuberent poetic style, decorative technique which includes letters, diaries, memoirs, etc.

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Yet his love for humanity which was honest and intense, more than made up for these deficiencies. This humanity at times appeared like a moral vision.

G. T. Madkholkar (Māḍkholkar, 1899–1976) was another major novelist of the period. He wrote political novels. He came to the novel with the reputation of a literary critic. The eleven novels that he produced had the backdrop of the major political events of the period from 1920 to 1945. The politics of the period was largely led by Mahatma Gandhi with mass movements like the Dandi march and salt and jungle satyagraha. After the Second World War, representative Congress Governments were established in seven states; there was the historic decision of the Congress on 8 August 1942 asking the British rulers to 'Quit India' which led to large-scale arrests of leaders. This was followed by a spell of disorder and lawlessness; the Japanese invasion; Subhaschandra Bose's Liberation Army and the terrible famine in Bengal. This was a period filled with high political drama. Socially also certain important changes were taking place in the lives of the educated middle and upper classes. Three of the eleven novels of Madkholkar, *Bhaṅgalele Deūḷ* (A Shattered Temple, 1934), *Duherī Jīvan* (Double Life, 1939) and *Nave Saṅsār* (New Modes of Life, 1941), deal with social problems, mainly the problem of a deserted wife. *Nāgakanyā* (A Naga Girl, 1941) and *Ḍāk Baṅgula* (The Dak Bungalow, 1942) were entertainments written to provide bold descriptions of love-making in an impressive, Sanskritized poetic style. *Muktātmā* (The Emancipated Soul, 1933), *Śāp* (Curse, 1936), *Kāntā* (Wife, 1939), *Mukhavaṭe* (Masks, 1940), *Candanvāḍī* (1943), *Pramadvara* (1943) made use of political situations and characters. The first of these is considered the first political novel in Marathi. Madkholkar has given vent in these novels to his anti-Gandhian views, his preference for revolutionary activities and his Hindu-based socialism. The novels do not give evidence of any mature political convictions or interpretation, though certain bold and convincing characters are presented. Again, there is no uniform purpose or standard in his novels; some are written to promote political ends and others to provide exciting escapist fare.

P. Y. Deshpande (Deśpāṇḍe, b. 1900) tried to strike a new path with his novels *Bandhāñacya Palīkaḍe* (Beyond Bondage, 1927), *Sukalele Phūl* (A Withered Flower, 1931), *Vikāl Jīvan* (Unconfined Life, 1939), *Kāḷī Rāṇī* (The Black Queen, 1941), *Nave Jag* (New World, 1941). He made an attempt to project in a narrative form the metaphysical instinct for reaching out to the mystery of the beyond, and the psychological instinct for plunging down into the darkness of the subconscious. But his first novel, *Bandhāñacya Palīkaḍe*, was a purely romantic picture of a love-affair defying social conventions. It made a deep impression on the young reader of those days.

A section of the readers and critics kept up their resistance to the fashionable fiction of the day. This prompted some other writers to experiment further. The emergence of women novelists like Gita Sane (Gītā Sāne, b. 1907) and Vibhavari Shirurkar (the pen-name of Mālatībāī Beḍekar, b. 1905) was an indication of this. Vibhavari Shirurkar created sensation with her two novels *Hindoḷyāvar* (On the Swing, 1934) and *Viralele Svapna* (A Dream that Disintegrated, 1935), and her short stories, which revealed the sorrows and privations of women awakened to new sensibilities and aspirations. *Bali* (Victim, 1950) is an expose of the world of criminals and delinquents done with mature understanding and sympathy.

P. S. Sane (1899–1950), popularly known as Sane Guruji, wrote his books with a rare sense of dedication and honesty. He discovered deep significance in commonplace things. He waged a long and valiant battle against the so-called modernistic thought and manners that were invading and polluting the sources of native modes of culture. He did it with the integrity of his character, and with his characteristic series of novels like *Syāmacī Āī* (Shyam's Mother, 1935), *Satī* (A Saintly Woman, 1940), *Krānti* (Revolution, 1940), *Punarjanma* (Rebirth, 1939). He wrote sweet stories for children in order to make them grow into proper citizens. He carried the teachings of Gandhiji, in a still simpler language, to the nook and corner of Maharashtra. He played a positive role in fostering the literary taste of a generation. His didactic, sentimental novels cast a remarkable spell on teenagers and drew them away from the crude, detective fiction of the day.

V. V. Bokil (Bokil, 1903–73) was a prolific writer of novels and short stories. His novels added up to more than twenty-five. Most of them were ordinary, and some mildly entertaining with an agreeable air of playfulness. Only slightly less prolific was D. R. Kavathekar (Kavaṭhekar, 1902–76). His better novels like *Apurā Ḍāva* (An Unfinished Game, 1941), have a craftsmanship and understanding of character which would justify his inclusion among the major novelists. P. B. Bhave (Bhāve, b. 1910) wrote passionate romantic novels with the purpose of reviving ancient cultural values and ethical standards while offering trenchant comments on neo-ethical practices and the ways of modern urban societies.

Breaking New Grounds: The Regional Novel

Among those who tried to break new ground, R. V. Dighe (Dighe, b. 1896) needs to be mentioned first. His *Pāṇakaḷā* (The Rainy Season, 1939), brought a fresh trend into the Marathi novel. It is infused with the feeling and atmosphere of a region. Its rural characters have a raw vitality and it presents vivid descriptions of nature, which is an integral part of the novel; and the descriptions are not merely decorative props. His *Sarāī* (Harvest Time, 1943) achieved

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a greater success with the lovable character of the rustic, romantic heroine, Ladi. Dighe's style is not uniform; it is often simple, and sometimes stilted.

Pāṇakaḷā started the trend of regional novels in Marathi, and established it as a class by itself. V. D. Chindarkar's *Mahāpūr* (The Great Flood, 1942), G. L. Thokal's *Gāvaguṇḍa* (The Village Rowdy, 1947) came close on the heels of Dighe's novels. But the trend gathered variety and strength during the next few years in the work of several novelists. Between them they brought to life different regions of Maharashtra.

G. N. Dandekar's (Dāṇḍekar, b. 1917) *Padaghavalī* (1956) has an important place in the Marathi regional novel. It draws its material from the northern part of the Ratnagiri district. *Padaghavalī* symbolizes a dying village and a declining set of values. Dandekar draws attention to this process with appealing sincerity and passion. There is a rare feeling in the narration, which belongs to the tradition of folk literature. It has remarkable appeal and simplicity, and the primitive, rustic characters rise in stature. The novel is an excellent piece of genuine regional literature. *Macīvaracā Budhā* (Budha of the Level-land in the Hills, 1958) was another attempt in the same direction. The detailed and accurate descriptions of nature in this novel—from the hills to the herbs—are almost unrivalled in Marathi fiction. The character of the old man Budha is an attractive extension, as it were, of the perennial life of nature. A degree of sentimentality and exaggeration are the weaknesses of Dandekar as a writer. *Kuṇā Ēkācī Bhraman Gāthā* (The Tale of a Person's Wanderings) tells the story of a young pilgrim doing a *parikramā* (a ritual walking-around) of the Narmada and a widow sanyasini who is drawn to him. The novel acquires a flavour characteristic of Bengali love stories. An industrious writer, Dandekar has been continuously turning out books of one kind or the other, letting the facility of his pen smother the merit of his writing. Vyankatesh Madgulkar's *Bangarwāḍi* (1965) is another notable piece of regional fiction superior in substance, attitude and style to most of its kind. It tells the story of a boyish schoolteacher who goes to work in a community of shepherds, tries to teach the alphabet to the shepherd boys and leaves the village (which gives its name to the novel) when it is deserted due to a drought. Before leaving, he had tried to lead the village to a new life but was warned by the headman not to educate the villagers, but only mind the urchins if they drifted into the classroom. The novel opened up to the readers the little known world of shepherds. This short novel is 'regional' in the total sense of the term. A. V. Joshi's (Jośī, b. 1921) *Rānbhūl* (1963) gives an exciting account of the Razakar excesses in the Hyderabad state and the consequent police action. It sketched a different aspect of regionalism. The poet B. B. Borkar's *Bhāviṇ* (The Temple Prostitute, 1950), in telling the tragic story of an unfortunate young woman and her unconventional love, succeeded in vivifying the regional life of Goa.

S. N. Pendse (Peṇḍse, b. 1913) stands out as a major novelist in a special sense though some have grouped him with the regional novelists. He has to be given credit for evolving a new kind of novel. In the post-Independence period the better reader of Marathi fiction disapproved of low entertainment parading as art and technique and an excess of didacticism passing from dedication to life. His need was first fulfilled by the 'New' poetry and the 'New' short story. The 'New' novel followed soon. The evolution of the 'New Marathi Novel' however was gradual—even in the case of S. N. Pendse. His early novels like *Elgār* (Attack, 1949) did not hold out much of a promise. He came into his own with *Gārambīcā Bāpu* (The Bapu of Garambi, 1952). This remains the high watermark of his achievement, even though it was his *Rathcakra* which won the Sahitya Akademi Award. In his series of novels, *Elgār*, *Haddapār* (Deportation, 1950), *Yaśodā* (the name of the heroine, 1957), *Hatyā* (the name of the hero, 1954), Kalandar (A Fakir, 1959), *Rathcakra* (Wheel of the Chariot, 1962), Pendse, like Dandekar, depicts the life of the north Ratnagiri region with its people's love of law-suits and festivals, the pitiable existence of dependents, the extramarital relations; and the natural scene, both fulfilled and famished, beautiful and barren. He makes it clear in the preface to *Gārambīcā Bāpu* that he had not planned a regional novel but that the region selected itself naturally in the excitement of his creative fervour. The web of life which the novel unfolds is honest and homogeneous. The characters too are true to the soil, and to fundamental human nature: Vithoba, who meekly accepts his impotence, Yashoda, who is consumed by her passion; Radha, for whom Bapu was everything and who endears everyone with her cordiality; and, finally, Bapu, who won over the whole of Garambi, overcoming his sorrow. This novel is free from the rigid framework of a story. It grows naturally and freely and attains a new level of the art of fiction which does not smell of craft. In *Hatyā* and *Kalandar*, Pendse tells the story of a poor boy from the region, disowned by his surroundings and compelled to seek his future in Bombay.

Experiments: Sporadic and Feeble

A striking experiment in the stream-of-consciousness novel was made by the founder of the 'New' poetry in Marathi, B. S. Mardhekar, in his *Rātrīca Divas* (A Night into a Day, 1942)—and in short spells in *Tāmbadī Māti* (Red Earth, 1943) and *Pāṇī* (Water, 1948). The first novel represents the flow of consciousness of a few hours. Dikpal, a journalist, comes home from office, takes a bath, has food with a friend, gets up in the morning, goes to office, works a little, reads the news that his beloved, Harini Sesal, has got married. The conscious actions during this period and

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the countless mental acts forming the flow of his consciousness are captured by the narrative. The attempt was inspired by the novels of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf, but failed to achieve their substance and solidity. Mardhekar appeared to sport with the idea and technique, and not sustain it seriously in the native context.

Vasant Kanetkar's *Ghar* (Home, 1950), Gangadhar Gadgil's *Lilice Phūl* (Lily Flower) and Manmohan Natu's *Zapurza* (Ecstasy) were written under the influence of the stream-of-consciousness technique. *Ghar* employs the technique in an attractive way, but without the penetration and subtlety of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. It carries us to the threshold of the subconscious. It does not become obscure. There is an undercurrent of lyricism in the story which concerns the problems of the middle classes who have to remain homeless in order to make a living in Bombay. *Pankh* (Wings) was his next novel. Then he turned to the form of drama where he carved out a distinct niche for himself.

The New Novel: A Promise Unfulfilled. Before turning to the other trends in Marathi fiction, those of biographical fiction and fictional histories—it is necessary to consider a vital and significant instance of the 'New' novel, afforded by Visram Bedekar's *Raṇāṅgaṇ* (Battlefield, 1939), this being the only novel written by the author. It was new and original in every way. It had a new background, a new narrative method, a new psychological attitude, and a new aspiration and sweep. It tells the story of how Chakradhar Vidwans and a German Jew girl Harta, fall in love while they are travelling together in a ship from Europe to the East. Harta later commits suicide and the wounded heart of Chakradhar begins to unearth a host of memories. These relate to the degradation of life under the Nazi rule, the travails of a world torn by war and the simple love of life which the common people show in adversity. Bedekar has the gift for vivid narration for delineation of mental acts and operations. The method is never conventional; it is always unexpected, and yet it is consistent and convincing, because it is basically honest. Chakradhar's failure in his first love makes him enjoy his pleasures heartlessly, but he reveals his humanity through his seemingly inhuman behaviour which surprises him as well as the readers. The style is simple and sincere, though disjointed. The novel achieves the dignity and power of a noble elegy through the deep impression it produces of a sad and desolate humanity. The novel was charged with obscenity for some of its brief and bold descriptions. This betrayed the incapacity of the reader fed on the popular fiction of the day to respond properly and adequately to the new novel. This was probably the reason why it could not set any trend.

Conclusion

The Marathi novel, despite its apparent variety and changes, moved in a single direction from H. N. Apte to B. V. Varerkar. It remained largely content-oriented, though few novelists revealed any new content. Most of the novelists were unable to present adequately even the traditional values. Didacticism was mistaken for faith in content. H. N. Apte did achieve a fusion of character and social context which was exceptional. And yet there was a kind of homogeneity in the cultural and social life of Maharashtra up to 1920 which came to be radically disturbed in later years in the social and literary spheres. In literature it became increasingly difficult to discover any harmony between the individual and the society. Forces of disintegration began to act. The novel began to concentrate on the inner world of the individual at the cost of social outlook. It, however, gave an impetus and a degree of vitality to aspects of structure and style. These new sources of power, however, were soon lost in pseudo-idealism and pseudo-art. Unsupported by any social obligation and ungoverned by any objective, these sources of power turned out to be illusory.

A change came about after 1935. The romantic halo which was inevitably created around the hero of fiction began to wane. This was an indication that the writers were prepared to look at life and individuals in a realistic manner. They began to discover the social dimension of reality and its impact on individual minds. With this emphasis on social awareness, the attention to technique, structure and style was relaxed. In the fifties, the Marathi novel promised a new surge of vitality. It came, at least up to some extent, from certain factors that shook the life of the country. The able novelists reached new heights in reconciling the claims of individual consciousness and social awareness. This raised new hopes for the future of the Marathi novel.

S. R. Biwalkar's *Sunītā* (1947) portrayed in an effective manner the tragic events in East Bengal at the time of the partition. It helped in leading the Marathi novel away from the life and problems of the middle class, and in turning its attention to the collective life of the poor, the socially inferior and the ignored. This brought forth such novels as Malatibai Bedekar's *Baḷi*, Uddhav Selke's *Dhag* (Heat), Jayawant Dalvi's *Cakra* (Wheel) and Madhu Mangesh Karnik's *Māhimacī Khādī* (The Mahim Creek). The last two of these deal in a boldly realistic manner with life in the slums. Certain characters from mythology are reinterpreted in terms of modern knowledge and attributes in such novels as V. S. Khandekar's *Yayāti*, Sivaji Sawant's *Mṛtyunjaya* and Ranjit Desai's *Rādheya*. The history of the later Maratha period has come in for romantic treatment in Ranjit Desai's *Swāmi* (Master), and in N. S. Inamdar's *Zepa* (A Leap) and other novels. Biographical novels have tried to bring out the individual concealed in historical figures, as in S. J. Joshi's *Ānandī-Gopāḷ* (on Anandibai Joshi, the first Maharashtrian woman to go abroad and her cranky husband Gopal) and Gangadhar Gadgil's *Durdamya* (on the life of Lokmanya Tilak). There are also novels written on

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persons with abnormal sexual tendencies; but most of these remained merely at the cheap, sensational level. Bhalchandra Nemade's *Kōsalā* (Nest, 1963), followed by three novels in the seventies, opened up a new horizon. These novels have not only flouted many of the long-accepted canons of novel form, technique and language but their unheroic heroes have also served to bring into focus the frustrating, the ironic and the irrational in the present-day world. The directions opened up by writers like Nemade should help liberate the Marathi novel from many of its constraints, of content, form and language.

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Oriya

GANESWAR MISHRA

The Beginning

The birth of the novel in Oriya is intimately linked with the growth of periodicals in Orissa. *Saudamini*, a novel by Ramashankar Roy (Rāmaṣaṅkar Rāy, 1858–1907) was serialized in a monthly, *Utkala Madhupa*, during 1877–78; but before the serialization of the novel was complete, the journal was discontinued and the author did not complete the novel. Soon after, he started serializing another novel, *Unmādini*, in *Indradhanu*. But *Indradhanu* survived only for a few months and *Unmādini* was also left incomplete. However, he completed his third novel *Bibāsini* (1891) in the monthly *Utkala Prabha* and the novel was approved as a text in the Bengal and Madras presidencies (Orissa formed a part of these presidencies then). Roy claims *Bibāsini* to be the first complete Oriya novel yet he is better remembered today as a dramatist than as a novelist.

Critics are not yet unanimous as to which is the first full-fledged novel in Oriya. In 1888, Umesh Chandra Sarkar (Umeścandra Sarkāra) published *Padmāmalī*. Almost at the same time, in another monthly *Pradīpa*, an anonymous author serialized two novels, *Mathara Sambāda* (The News of the Math) and *Anathini*. But with the discontinuance of *Pradīpa*, neither of these novels could be completed. In the beginning of the 20th century, two novels were published: *Kalābatī* (1902) by Aparna Panda (Aparṇā Pāṇḍa) and *Bhīma Bhūyān* (1908) by Gopalaballava Das (Gopāla-ballabha Dāsa, 1860–1914).

It is Fakirmohana Senapati (Fakīrmohana Senāpati, 1843–1918) and not Roy, Sarkar, Panda or Das who can claim to be the first major novelist in Oriya. Senapati published two of his novels, *Chha Māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* (Six Acres and a Half, 1897) and *Lachamā* (1901), almost at the time that Panda and Das published theirs. But he is so vastly superior to them that it is difficult to believe that he was their contemporary.

Novel writing started in India as a result of the Indian authors' exposure to western literature, from the mid-19th century onwards. In Bengal, so close to Orissa geographically as well as culturally, novels and other forms of prose writing started a little after the mid-19th century and by the end of the 19th century Bengal had a tradition in prose literature of which it could be justifiably proud. In Orissa novels and other forms of prose were written towards the end of the century under the influence of Bengali authors. In the 19th century, Orissa was extremely backward economically as well as educationally, and there was no educated middle class which could patronize a literary journal or buy printed books. Medieval *kāvyas* and puranas, mostly in palm-leaf manuscripts, had

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their circulation, but a literature in prose had a slow and uncertain growth until Senapati revolutionalized Oriya prose writing in his novels, short stories and autobiography.

By the time periodicals were published in Orissa and Roy and Sarkar published their novels, prose literature in Bengali had been considerably developed and some of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's novels had already been published. Throughout the 19th century, Orissa was influenced by Bengal and many eduated Oriyas were well-versed in Bengali literature. Obviously, Oriya authors saw a model for the future of their own literature in the already developed Bengali prose literature of the time and were particularly influenced by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. It is also interesting to note that both Roy and Sarkar were Bengalis settled in Orissa.

Roy's *Bibāsini* has as its backdrop the second half of the 18th century. Orissa, then, was under the Maratha rule and the Maratha soldiers used to invade the state and with the help of the native landowners exploit the common people. The horrible famine of 1866 completely destroyed the economy of the state. While presenting the picture of the Orissa of this dark age, Roy has shown a group of patriotic young men revolting against the oppressive rulers and turning to burglary in order to help the poor. This may easily remind one of *Ānandamath* (1882) in which some young Bengalis are shown leading austere lives and fighting the corrupt rulers of Bengal in the early days of the British rule.

Bibāsini was written at a time when the impact of western education was beginning to be felt in Orissa. While presenting the social picture of a transitional time, Roy has often assumed the role of a teacher and preached long sermons to his readers. He has been guided by the conventional code of morality and has shown his characters not as they should have normally behaved, but as the novelist would like them to. For instance, when young Raghunath, the widower-protagonist of the novel, meets Kalabati, a pretty sixteen-year-old widow, in a lonely room, he instantly develops a brotherly affection towards her. *Bibāsini* is full of adventure, romance and suspense. There are too many characters in long descriptions of scenes and incidents, who do not develop in the course of action, and the novelist hardly attempts to probe their minds.

Sarkar's *Padmamālī* has as its theme the romantic love between Parikhit Singh and Padmamali. The story is set against a dispute between two princely states, Mayurbhanj and Nilagiri which was a fact of contemporary history. The novel has great value as a social and historical document of the time as the author vividly portrays the complex relationships between princely states as well as between the British administrators and the native rulers. The novel is full of romantic scenes, adventures, chance coincidences and suspense. Several incidents seem unrealistic and unconvincing. Though the novel ends with the union of the lover and the beloved, it is full of images of murder, rape, burglary, burning houses and so on. It reads more like the prose rendering of a medieval *kāvya* dealing with princely romances than a novel. Its backdrop of contemporary society, however, makes it appear closer to reality than the stories in the *kāvyas* which operate in a world of fantasy.

Panda's *Kaḷābatī* is hardly remembered today by critics and readers, but in its treatment of contemporary society it is more realistic than any other early novel in Oriya and hence deserves a special place in the history of Oriya fiction. It describes the journey of Kalabati, a pretty and educated girl of Madhya Pradesh, in Orissa, Madras, Bombay and Bengal. The protagonist observes the popularity of the Brahmo cult in Calcutta, the corruption of the mahants in Nadia and Brindavan, the westernization of Bombay society and the conflict in Orissa between traditional and modern authors. Though in the description of the physical features of Kalabati—and in many other passages—the novelist follows the conventional style of the medieval *kāvyas*, *Kvḷābatī* can be called a social novel unlike *Bibāsini* and *Padmamāḷī* which may be termed as historical romances.

Bhīma Bhūyān, by Gopalaballva Das written only sixteen years after *Bibāsini*, has as its hero a Bhuyan youth (a tribe that lives in Keonjhar and some other parts of Orissa) after whom the novel is named. It is the first attempt in Oriya—may be one of the earliest attempts in Indian literature—to portray in fiction the life-style of the tribal people. The novel centres round the romantic love between Bhima Bhuyan, the tribal youth and Rajajema, the daughter of King Mardaraj. Bhima proves his military skill, defeating Mardaraj's enemy, King Jagadev, and claims the hand of Rajajema. Rajajema too falls in love with Bhima. But the inequality in their status, one being a tribal and the other a princess, stands in their way and they fail to get united. Both of them, however, decide not to marry and lead the lives of ascetics.

All these early novels are now out of print and are hardly read by anyone except students and research scholars. For one thing, none of the early novelists wrote in the simple idiomatic language of the time, comprehensible to the common reader. They preferred a heavy Sanskritized style, with long and complex sentences and conventional images and metaphors, a remnant of the style of the *kāvyas*. In their selection of the themes, though everyone of them, in varying degrees, was aware of the contemporary social realities, and meant to convey a message for the benefit of the readers, none of them could resist casting his work in the mode of a romance. Thus love between young people was a popular theme.

The early novelists portrayed their characters more as types than individuals, more or less in the conventional black and white method of delineation. Hardly any attempt was made to probe the minds of the characters. The novelist's presence is felt by the readers, from time to time, in

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the pronouncement of some moral judgement or in curtailing the story to suit some moral purpose. Particularly in dealing with the theme of love, the novelists have been guided by the conventional attitude to love and marriage. Roy in his attitude to widow remarriage and Das to marriage between the tribal and the aristocratic Hindu seem sympathetic to the conventional practice.

Fakirmohan Senapati: The Father of the Oriya Novel. Fakirmohan Senapati's emergence as a novelist is a significant fact not only in Oriya literature, but in Indian literature as a whole. Though a contemporary of Roy, Sarkar, Panda and Das, Senapati completely discarded the theme of romantic love between a prince and a princess and wrote about common people and their problems. While his predecessors favoured a heavy Sanskritized style, Senapati used colloquial idiomatic Oriya with great skill and competence. If the early novelists' works seem more or less like prose renderings of medieval *kāvyas*, Senapati's novels are realistic to the core—and he can be favourably compared with the 20th-century novelists such as Premchand and Bibhutibhushan Banerjee.

Senapati was born in the coastal district of Balasore, in a poor peasant family and had little opportunity for formal education. He began as a teacher and worked his way up to the post of Dewan (administrator). Working in different parts of Oriya-speaking areas, he came in contact with people of different walks of life and featured some of them in his humorous *kāvya*, *Utkala Bhramaṇam* (A Journey in Utkal, 1892).

It is important to be aware of the political, social and economic situation of the 19th-century Orissa in order to understand and appreciate Senapati's literary works. It was a dark age in Orissan history. The Oriyas had no state of their own (Orissa was formed in 1936) and they lived scattered in the three neighbouring states of Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Madras. As a result, they were neglected economically and had little opportunity to develop their literature and culture. There were few schools in Orissa and the Oriyas were extremely backward in education. Most of the Government employees in Orissa were Bengalis.

During Senapati's lifetime, attempts were made by some influential Bengalis, which included Kantichandra Bhattacharya, a schoolteacher in Balasore and Rajendralal Mitra, the noted historian, to persuade the British Government to make Bengali the medium of instruction in Orissan schools. Though this move was vehemently opposed and finally rejected, its impact was distinctly felt in Orissan life in two ways: first, the Oriyas realized that unless all the Oriya-speaking areas were brought under one political administration, Oriya language and culture would face extinction; secondly, Oriya writers must enrich their modern literature if their language was to survive.

With this background in view, it is easy to understand why Senapati started his literary career as a writer of textbooks, and why Oriya nationalism was a dominant theme in its literature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Senapati apparently had no literary ambition in his youth. His purpose in writing textbooks was prompted by his zeal of opposing the move to abolish Oriya from Orissan schools.

Though Senapati is recognized as the greatest prose writer in Oriya, he began his literary career late in life. He has written four novels, two volumes of short stories and an autobiography. His novels are: *Lachamā* (1901, *Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* (Six Acres and a Half, 1902), *Māmu* (Uncle, 1913) and *Prāyaścitta* (Expiation, 1915). *Lachamā* is a historical novel while the other three are portraits of contemporary society. Natabar Samantroy, a noted Senapati scholar, in his *Oḍia Sāhityara Itihāsa* points out that all the four novels of Senapati can be taken as depicting the social history of Orissa from the 18th to the early 20th century. He suggests that Senapati's novels are set against the following periods:

Lachamā	1720–1800
Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha	1801–1840
Māmu	1841–1880
Prāyaścitta	1881–1920

Though each of Senapati's novels is complete in itself, together they present a continuous picture of two hundred years of the social history of Orissa and can be taken as four volumes of one great novel.

Lachamā is the story of the Maratha invasion of Orissa and the suffering and the heroic resistance of an Oriya country-girl in the face of such invasion. *Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* is a vivid account of the exploitation of the poor village-folk by zamindars. *Māmu*, again, is a story of exploitation of the village-folk by petty Government officials and clerks. *Prāyaścitta* portrays the predicament of a semi-educated youth, who persistently defies the old order of things with his overenthusiasm for new western values. These novels reveal that Senapati was intensely aware of the social changes that were taking place around him. Except his first novel, for which he must have gathered material from second hand sources—either from recorded history or from legends and folk tales current in the Orissan countryside—he wrote all his works out of his own personal experience. Exploitation of the poor villagers by zamindars and the rise of a new class of exploiters in the petty officials and clerks under the British Government were the two dominant facts of the social history of the 19th-century Orissa, and Senapati chose to write about them in *Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* and *Māmu*. The theme of *Prāyaścitta* unmistakably suggests that he was neither a traditionalist nor one overzealous

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for the new wave of westernization that was sweeping the country. Perhaps he preferred a middle course. *Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* is generally accepted as Senapathi's greatest achievement in fiction. It narrates the story of Ramachandra Mangaraj, who rose to the position of a zamindar by acquiring vast property from a rich Muslim in Bengal. Yet he covets the fertile patch of six and half acres of land owned by a childless weaver couple, Bhagia and Saria, near by. On Champa's (the ugly, cunning maidservant of Mangaraj) persuasion, Saria borrows money from Mangaraj to build a temple for the local goddess so that she would be blessed with a son. Unable to repay the loan they lose their land. Bhagia then turns mad and Saria dies of starvation at Mangaraj's door. Mangaraj is imprisoned, and in the jail he meets the mad Bhagia who in vengeance attacks him. Later Mangaraj is released but dies under intense mental agony. In the meantime, Champa had eloped with a barber, taking with her a lot of valuables. The barber kills her for them but is himself drowned in a river.

Senapati's novels are a portrait gallery of characters. Most of them have become archetypal in Oriya literature. Even a minor character that appears once or twice in a Senapati novel leaves a permanent impression on the reader. Senapati seems to be at his best when he portrays the Satan in man as in the portraits of Mangaraj and Champa. Though Senapati had love and sympathy for the poor and the neglected in society, he does not seem to have known them as intimately as he knows the rich and the affluent.

Senapati made effective use of realism. In *Cha māṇa Āṭha Guṇṭha* he describes vividly even the filth and dirt in the village pond. His sense of humour and irony have remained unsurpassed in Oriya literature and it is this charactersitic which has made him popular with all sections of readers. However, it is possible to find fault with his form—it is loose and episodic—and this may be partly due to the novels being written for serialization in magazines. Profoundly religious, Senapati ends all his novels with the wicked being punished, either by some external agent or by his own conscience, thus conforming to the convention of 'poetic justice'.

The Post-Senapati Scene. After Senapati the novel seemed to have established itself as a form in Oriya and a number of authors wrote under the inspiration of the late master. But none could excel Senapati in his intimate observation of life, maturity of style and sense of humour and irony. We can broadly divide the novels, written in the first two decades of the 20th century, into two groups: social and historical. The novelists were clearly guided by two motives—to reform society and to arouse Oriya and Indian nationalism. Themes such as widow remarriage, abolition of the dowry system, spread of female education, exploitation in the name of religion were widely favoured. In historical novels, stories from the ancient past of Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Orissa were interpreted so as to make the readers aware of their glorious heritage and tradition.

Kanakalatā (1925) by Nandakishore Bal (Nandakiśora Bāl, 1875–1928) may be taken as a representative social novel of the post-Senapati era. A contemporary and friend of Senapati and Radhanath Roy, Bal has also been acclaimed a modern poet of Orissa.

Bal belongs to the first generation of Oriyas to receive western education and to work under the British Government as an official. In spite of his great love of village life and traditional society, he was progressive in his attitude. In *Kanakalatā*, for instance, he supports widow remarriage, the abolition of the dowry system and criticizes the marriage system prevalent in orthodox Hindu society which does not heed the wishes of either the bride or the groom.

Kanakalatā narrates how Dhananjay, an educated youth, marries Kanakalata, the sister of his friend Rajendra, without accepting any dowry. Rajendra, after his sister's marriage, falls in love with Uma, the widowed sister of Dhananjay. But society does not approve of the marriage of a widow. At the time of such a crisis, Uma suddenly dies of cholera and Rajendra turns ascetic.

Chintamani Mohanty (Cintāmaṇi Mahānti, 1876–1943), like Bal, is both a poet and a novelist. A prolific writer, he faithfully imitates the two masters in the field, Radhanath Roy and Fakirmohan Senapati and shows little originality in theme and style. His poetry is mainly patriotic in theme and his novels, moralistic.

Mohanty has written five novels. In four of the novels he tells the story of a village-based family. The family faces a crisis of some sort—either the parents do not have an issue and the family faces the fear of extinction or one of the children goes astray—ultimately the crisis is resolved and peace and happiness are restored. In *Yugalamatha* (1920), however, Mohanty portrays the corrupt and lustful life of the mahants. Mohanty's novels occasionally present intimate pictures of the contemporary society such as the emigration of the coolies from Orissa villages to Assam, and life in the *maṭhs*, but often the dominance of chance elements makes his works unconvincing. Stylistically, he is a shadow of Senapati.

Other novelists of the period include Mrutyunjay Rath (Mṛtyuñjaya Ratha, 1822–1924), Ramachandra Acharya (Rāmacandra Ācārya, 1893–1951) and Tarini Charan Rath (Tāriṇicaraṇa Ratha). Mrtyunjay Rath was a Sanskrit scholar who translated some Sanskrit plays into Oriya and wrote a number of scholarly articles. He wrote one novel, *Adbhuta Pariṇāma* (1915) which has as its theme the conversion of a young Oriya man to Christianity. Rath does not seem to appreciate such conversions and shows his hero as being attracted towards a young Christian girl, marrying her under compulsion and becoming the father of

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two children but not being reconciled to the new way of life.

Ramachandra Acharya wrote a number of novels based on the histories of Orissa, Rajasthan and Maharashtra. He also translated Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* and Banabhatta's *Kādambari* into Oriya. In each of his novels Acharya tells his readers a beautiful story of heroism and adventure, love and romance, in a flowery Sanskritized style, with the motive of making his readers feel proud of their glorious heritage. His historical novels have earned him an important place in the history of Oriya fiction.

Annapūrṇa (1935) by Tarini Charan Rath is a historical novel which narrates the invasion of the kingdom of Orissa by Krishnadeva Raya, the 16th-century ruler of Vijayanagara; the war between the powerful armies of Krishnadeva Raya and Prataparudra Deva, the king of Orissa; the treaty between both the rulers and the marriage of Annapurna, the daughter of Prataparudra Deva, with Krishnadeva Raya. While portraying the ancient military glory of Orissa, the novelist has also expressed his enthusiasm for the emancipation of women in society.

Kuntala Kumari Sabat. A major woman novelist Kuntala Kumari Sabat (Kuntaḷākumāri Sābata, 1900–38), has five novels to her credit. Except one (*Raghu Arakṣita*, 1928) the other works are slender in volume and may be described as long stories or novellas. Like the other novelists of the post-Senapati era, Sabat is also obsessed with two themes: social reform and patriotism. Though she lived most of her life outside Orissa, all her stories are about rural Orissa society. She writes mostly about lower middle-class families, and particularly significant are her creations of Oriya female characters. In *Nā-tuṇḍi* (1925) she has portrayed a benevolent zamindar who leads a simple life and talks of equality, social justice and dignity of physical labour. Sabat raised a very strong voice against child-marriage and the exploitation of women in orthodox Hindu society.

At one time Sabat's novels were quite popular among readers. Now they have lost much of their appeal as their themes have lost their relevance. Sabat uses a colloquial idiomatic Oriya which occasionally reminds one of Senapati. But sometimes she writes in an affected manner, in imitation of Hindi or Bengali, which may be due to her lack of contact with the Oriya cultural milieu for long periods. She invariably ends her novels preaching her ideas about social reform and patriotism and thus her art degenerates into propaganda.

Two Landmarks. Though Senapati's influence on Oriya novelists still continues in some ways, after Sabat the Oriya novel showed signs of breaking away from the Senapati tradition. Vaishnav Charan Das' (Baiṣṇabacaraṇa Dāsa, b. 1899) *Mane Mane* (Inside One's Mind, 1926) and Upendra Kishore Das' (Upendra Kiśor Dāsa, b. 1901) *Malājanha* (The Dead Moon, 1922) clearly suggest a new turn in Oriya fiction. Both the novels have love as their theme—love that is unconventional, inviting bitter opposition from an orthodox society. In their rejection of the conventional code of morality, portrayal of characters as psychological beings and products of circumstances, both the novels anticipate much that is written by contemporary authors. Vaishnav Charan Das, however, fails to evolve a distinct style of his own. He uses both colloquial and Sanskritized Oriya thus lacking a sense of continuity and uniformity in his style. *Malājanha* is written in lucid lyrical prose and is aesthetically one of the most satisfying novels in Oriya and is also perhaps the first first-person narrative in the language. This novel has been made into a successful film.

Gandhism, Socialism, the Freedom Movement and the Novel. Novels written from the thirties onwards clearly show the authors' increasing awareness of various political and social ideologies that stirred the intellectual atmosphere of the country. Particularly significant is the impact of Gandhi, socialism and the Indian Freedom Movement. It is doubtful if any of these novelists read Marx or other socialist thinkers in the original or really understood the nature and significance of the Freedom Movement in depth. Most of the novelists of this category preach a romantic and vague sense of equality envisaging economic and social justice through non-violent Gandhian means and propagate some of the well-known Gandhian doctrines.

Kanā Māmu (1947) by Lakshmikantha Mahapatra (Lakṣmīkānta Mahāpātṛa, 1888–1953), though incomplete, is a significant work written against the backdrop of the Freedom Movement. In this novel, Mahapatra portrays beautifully the character of a middle-aged man, who has lost one eye, as a benevolent village leader effectively organizing the village youth to fight the British Government. The details of village life depicted in the novel are authentic and the protagonist with his serious purpose as well as eccentricities, is very lively and memorable. No novelist after Senapati had as rich a sense of humour as Mahapatra had and Mahapatra modelled the character of Kana Mamu after a real person he knew. Mahapatra, however, is better known as a lyricist and writer of humorous verse. He founded and edited a humorous magazine, *Dagaro*, for many years. He led a secluded life, being a victim of leprosy from early youth but never lost the cheer of his mind all his life.

Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (Kāḷindī Caraṇa Pāṇigrahi, b. 1901) is the most important novelist who has been clearly influenced by Gandhism and socialism. He has written volumes of poems, short stories, essays and plays with considerable success. His younger brother Bhagaban Charan Panigrahi (1906–43) is the founder of the Communist party in Orissa and has written powerful short stories with a Marxist bias. Kalindi Charan Panigrahi seems

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to have been influenced by his younger and potentially more talented brother.

Māṭira Maṇiṣa (Man of the Soil, 1934) is Panigrahi's greatest novel. It can safely be taken as the most widely read novel in Oriya. It has run into forty editions and has been translated into all Indian languages and into English by Lila Ray (*A House Undivided*). *Māṭira Maṇiṣa* centres round a crisis in a peasant family in an interior village of Cuttack. The crisis arises when the younger brother, instigated by his wife, wants to take his share of the paternal property whereas Baraju, the elder brother, following the wish of his late father, insists on not dividing the property. At last Baraju leaves the village with his wife and two small children, allowing Chhakadi to enjoy all the paternal property. But after Baraju leaves the house, Chhakadi feels miserable and follows him to request him to come back to the house again. Written in extremely lucid lyrical prose, the novel evokes an intimate portrait of Orissan rural community. Characters such as Baraju and Chhakadi have almost become archetypal in modern Oriya literature.

Panigrahi wrote two other novels, *Luhāra Maṇiṣa* (Man of Steel, 1947) and *Ājira Maṇiṣa* (Man of Today, 1958) as a sequel to *Māṭira Maṇiṣa*. In *Luhāra Maṇiṣa* Baraju is shown joining the Freedom Movement. *Ājira Maṇiṣa* presents a picture of the post-Independence India. These two novels show clearly the decline of the genius of Panigrahi as a novelist.

Panigrahi has also written a few historical novels of which *Muktāgaḍara Kṣudhā* (The Hunger of Muktagada, 1932) deserves mention. It depicts the character of the prince of a feudal state of Orissa, who was an oppressive ruler but later turns into an ascetic and a humanitarian.

Harekrushna Mahatab (Harekṛṣṇa Mahatāb, b. 1899), the well-known political leader of India, is a prolific writer in Oriya. Mahatab has written a number of novels against the backdrop of the Indian Freedom Movement. Having first-hand experience of the Movement, Mahatab writes with authority and sincerity. *Pratibhā* (1922) is the story of an Indian housewife joining the Freedom Movement at the call of Gandhi. *Ṭāuṭar* (1950) deals with the village touts who exploit the simple country-folk and a schoolteacher's mission to reform the village society. Mahatab's latest novel, *Trutiya Parva* (The Third Phase, 1977) depicts the post-Independence society steeped in corruption and political and ideological unrest.

Mahatab writes in a simple, monotonous, reportorial manner and is overconscious of the message he wants to convey to his readers.

Ananta Prasada Panda (Ananta Pṛasāda Pāṇḍa, b. 1906) has written novels and short stories with a socialistic bias. He has published four novels, with themes such as marriage between a young girl and an old man (*Bhāgyacakra*, The Wheel of Fate, 1928); between a rich boy and poor girl (*Nuā Duniā*, The New World, 1947); and exploitation of the coolies by their employers (*Coolie*, 1948). Though not important as works of art, Panda's novels reveal the general mood of the writings of the time—an enthusiasm for social justice and economic equality. *Coolie* is perhaps the first novel in Oriya in which the heroine comes from the labour class. Panda shows the coolies organizing themselves into a trade union and forcing their employers to accept their demands.

Ramaprasad Simha (Rāmapṛasāda Simha) was a popular novelist of the pre-Independence period who combined, in his works, Gandhian ideas of non-violence with Marxist ideas of class struggle and classless society. In *Homaśikha* (The Flame of Fire, 1937) and *Samāpti* (The End, 1962) he portrays the exploitation of the poor by the rich. *Pūjāra Bali* (The Sacrifice in Worship, 1930) has the Salt Movement (the movement to manufacture salt illegally in defiance of the British law, was started by Gandhi in Dandi; it spread to Balasore and other parts of Orissa) as the backdrop of the story. Simha, like Mahatab, often seems to write with a propaganda motive.

Pre-Independence Novelists

Batakrushna Praharaj (Baṭakṛṣṇa Praharāja) published five novels during 1946–47. He is a good story-teller who is aware of the malaise that corrupts Indian society such as the exploitation of the village community by the zamindar, neglect of widows, casteism and superstitions. Praharaj, in his treatment of theme and style, can be placed in the post-Senapati era.

Chakradhar Mohapatra (Cakṛadhāra Mahāpātṛa, b. 1907) wrote three social and two historical novels, most of which were published in the thirties. *Dukhini Gobara Goṭei* (The Unfortunate Girl Who Collects Cow-dung, 1930), portraying an inter-caste marriage, was immensely popular for some years.

Godavarish Mishra (Gōdābarīśa Miśṛa, 1886–1956) the most important novelist of this group was also a poet, playwright and an essayist. Mishra has written four novels: *Ghaṭāntara* (Metamorphosis), *Abhāgini* (The Unfortunate Girl), *Aṭharaśa Satara* (Eighteen Hundred and Seventeen) and *Nirbāsita* (The Banished). *Abhāgini* was written in 1922 and the other novels during 1946–51. Mishra writes in an idiomatic and lucid style, with the intention of narrating an interesting story, which would appeal to all sections of readers. In fact all his novels are adaptations of western classics, but Mishra adapts western themes to Orissan background so skilfully that they appear to be authentic pictures of Orissan life and society. *Aṭharaśa Satara* which narrates the revolution of the Paikas (a military race settled in Khurda, who revolted against the British rule in 1887) under Baxi Jagabandhu Bidyadhar, is modelled after Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, and is the most successful of Mishra's novels. The other novels which Mishra adapted

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into Oriya are Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (*Ghāṭāntara*) and Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* (*Abhāgini*). Mishra admits that *Nirbāsita* is an adaptation from a western novel, but does not mention its name. Adaptations of western novels into Oriya, rather than their literal translations, have been more popular among readers in Orissa. Godavarish Mishra and Godavarish Mohapatra are among the most successful novelists whose adaptations have almost been mistaken as original works. Perhaps the most successful translation of any western novel into Oriya so far is Udayanath Sarangi's version of Harriet B. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It has run into several editions.

Almost all the works that have received the Nobel Prize have been translated into Oriya but they have failed to enjoy a wide readership. Orissa has always lacked good translators either to or from the Oriya language. Translations of some of the novels of Premchand by Golak Behari Dhall have been quite successful. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra Chatterjee and Tarashankar Banerjee have gained popularity in Orissa through translations of their works. Almost all the important English novels have been rendered into Oriya in abridged form and these works seem popular among school children. Shridhar Das has retold more than fifty English novels in Oriya.

Godavarish Mohapatra (Godābarīśa Mahāpāṭra, 1848–1965) is a poet, novelist and story writer who is equally well-known as the editor of *Nian Khuntā*, a journal devoted to humour and satirical writings. Mohapatra published six novels during 1925–38. Influenced by Godavarish Mishra, Mohapatra wrote *Raktapāta* (Bloodshed, 1930) modelled after Marie Correlli's *Vendetta*. In *Premapāthe* (On the Path of Love, 1932) he portrays the silent suffering of women in Indian society. But in *Bidroha* (Revolution, 1938) he shows women revolting against the oppressive male dominated society. Mohapatra wrote two historical novels, *Bandira Māya* (The Prisoner's Trick, 1934) and *Rājadrohi* (The Rebel, 1925), against the backdrop of the Maratha rule and the Bhoi dynasty in Orissa respectively.

Mohapatra's novels are immensely readable for their interesting stories, but we do not find anything significantly new either in the choice of his themes or narrative technique. In *Premapāthe*, however, he follows the epistolary method of narrative which no Oriya novelist seems to have done before him.

During the twenties and the thirties, a number of young poets, Annad Shankar Roy (Annadāśaṅkara Rāya, b. 1904) and Kalindi Charan Panigrahi (Kāḷindī Caraṇa Pāṇigrāhi, b. 1901) being the most prominent among them, called themslves *Sabjas* (Greens) and wrote under the inspiration of Rabindranath Tagore. This group expressed its progressive and westernized ideas about life and literature in a joint work entitled *Bāsanti* (1924). *Bāsanti* written by nine authors, each taking up different chapters, is a unique experiment in Orissan fiction. It deals with the conflict between the traditional and modern values in Orissan society in the early decades of this century.

Sachidananda Routroy (Saccidānanda Rauturāya, b.1916) who has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for poetry has published two collections of short stories and also edits a literary quarterly, *Diganta*. His novel *Citragriba* (1936) portrays a group of young men of Calcutta, who live in a world of illusion and fantasy. This satirical novel appears unaffected by the several 'isms' and ideologies that found their way into most of the novels written during and after Independence.

Kahnu Charan Mohanty: A Story-teller Par Excellence. Kahnu Charan Mohanty (Kāhnucaraṇa Mahānti, b. 1906) is the most prolific and indeed, the most popular novelist of this century. After Senapati, it is Mohanty whose novels have gained access to almost every Oriya home and although his influence has declined recently, he is, for good or for ill, primarily responsible for creating the taste and market for the modern Oriya novel. Mohanty has not broken away significantly from the Senapati tradition, either in the choice of theme or style. He has mostly written about Orissan rural society—the problem of marriage and love, caste and economic exploitation. None of his characters offers radical views about life and society, though many of them suffer as they fail to be reconciled with the hostile world around them. Mohanty ends many of his novels with the vision of a utopian society. He is a story-teller par excellence who can sustain the reader's interest till the last page. His language is lucid, colloquial and idiomatic, while his pictures of coastal Orissa are authentic and vividly drawn.

Mohanty has written about thirty novels, and has received the Sahitya Akademi Award for *Ka* (The Proxy, 1953). Some of his important works are *Adekhā hāta* (The Unseen Hand, 1939), *Śāsti* (Punishment, 1945), *Hā anna* (Famine, 1933), *Bālirāja* (The King of Bali, 1926) and *Śarbarī* (Night, 1950). *Śarbarī* is the story of the evolution of the human race from its primitive stage. *Hā anna* offers the picture of the Orissan society during the devastating famine of 1866. *Adekhā hāta* and *Śāsti* are stories of the suffering of two married women who were unable to marry the men they loved.

Gopinath Mohanty's Novels: A Saga of Tribal Life. Gopinath Mohanty (b. 1914) is decidedly the most important novelist after Senapati. Besides novels, Mohanty has written volumes of short stories, essays and a grammar of the language of the Konds. He has also translated Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* into Oriya. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel on tribal life, *Amṛtara Santāna* (Sons of Nectar, 1949), and the Jnanpith Award for his *Māṭi Matala* (The Fertile Soil, 1964), a novel dealing with the post-Independence rural society of Orissa.

Mohanty has published fifteen novels so far. Most of

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them portray the life of the aboriginal tribes of Orissa. *Harijana* (1948) depicts the life of the untouchables in a society dominated by the affluent caste-Hindus. *Dānāpāni* (Bread and Water, 1955) is a portrayal of an individual who forgoes everything in life, including the loyalty of his wife, to climb the bureaucratic ladder. Novels like *Rāhura Chāya* (The Shadow of Rahu, 1955) and *Laya Bilaya* (Waves in the Mind, 1961) probe the human mind in all its light and shadow. *Māṭi Matala* records the transition that the village society is passing through as a result of the impact of several political and economic forces that have been generated in the city.

Though Mohanty has a wide range of themes and is equally successful in his portrayal of rustic, tribal and city life, he has distinguished himself in his novels which reveal an insight into tribal life. It is interesting to note that one of the earliest novels in Oriya (Gopalaballava Das' *Bhīma Bhūyān*, published in 1908) also dealt with tribal life.

Paraja is set in a small village in Koraput inhabited by the Parajas, an aboriginal tribe of farmers. The aged Sukrujani has two sons and two daughters, one of whom attracts the attention of the lecherous forest guard. Sukrujani, however, does not give his daughter to him. In retaliation, when the forest guard discovers one of Sukrujani's sons preparing handia (country liquor) illegally he imposes a heavy fine on him. In order to pay the fine Sukrujani and his two sons borrow money from the local sahukar (moneylender) and as per the local custom they serve him as his gotis (slaves). Eventually they lose their little property and the two girls to the sahukar. Sukrujani and his sons realizing the extent of the injustices done to them kill the sahukar and surrender themselves to the police.

Paraja and some other novels of Mohanty, written about tribal life, deserve a high place in Indian fiction as works of art. No reader can ever forget the beauty of the landscape of Koraput, the sublime sense of joy and wonder that pervades the life and philosophy of its people and the poetry of Mohanty's language and style. Mohanty is a superb artist in presenting man in nature, in singing songs of spring, youth and joy, and in portraying vividly the details of the life-style of a people. But he is not always successful in conveying the sense of darkness and agony of his characters. In spite of the ghastly murder with which the novel ends, *Paraja* seems to be the idyllic picture of a group of men, unspoiled by 'civilization'. Mohanty's novels on tribal life, which some critics call 'anthropological', seem to be presented from the point of view of a narrator alien to the milieu he is dealing with and excited at discovering material that is remote and exotic.

Several critics have found fault with Mohanty's form. Repetitions and digressions are not infrequent in his works thus suggesting a lack of focus and perspective. But in Indian narrative tradition structural laxity is acceptable. The puranas and folk-tales display a looseness in form which does not minimize their value. Mohanty's works, even if their form may have been found to have some defects, do convey a sense of epic dimension and magnitude.

Post-Independence Novelists

Nityananda Mohapatra (Nityānanda Mahāpātra, b. 1912), the son of Lakshmikanta Mohapatra, the author of *Kanā māmu*, is a poet, novelist and essayist. Mohapatra has written a number of novels of which *Jīantā Maṇiṣa* (The Living Man, 1945), *Hiḍamāṭi* (The Rice Field, 1948) and *Bhaṅga Hāda* (The Broken Bone, 1948) are important. In *Hiḍamāṭi* and *Bhaṅga Hāda* we get the picture of the countryside during the years of the Freedom Movement. The novelist writes in colloquial, idiomatic Oriya, about poverty and superstitions, perhaps under Gandhi's inspiration to return to rural values. *Jīanta Maṇiṣa* is a psychological novel which depicts the sustained love between a widowed sister-in-law and married brother-in-law. This novel reminds one of *Malajahna* and *Mane Mane* referred to earlier.

Rajkishore Patnaik (Rājakiśora Paṭṭanāyaka, b. 1916) has written a number of novels in which he mostly analyzes the psychology of lovers. He generally shows lovers in a dilemma: one man being loved by two women: a lover facing a hostile society and so on. Patnaik seems to be fond of long descriptions defining love, the predicament of lovers, the philosophy of true love, etc. In his works, elements of story or action are not prominent, this may explain why he is not popular among readers.

Rajkishore Patnaik's sister, Basanta Kumari Patnaik (Basanta Kumārī Paṭṭanāyaka, b. 1927) has written a masterpiece, *Amadā Bata* (The Untrodden Path, 1951), which has been immensely successful in its drama and film versions. She has written seven novels in all, but her fame rests mainly on this novel.

The narrative element in *Amadā Bata* is thin. It is primarily concerned with the character of Maya before and after her marriage. Maya, the only daughter of middle-class parents, leads an absolutely carefree life till she gets married and turns into a sober and obedient housewife in a family dominated by elders. The novel ends showing Maya attending on her ailing mother-in-law, unable to go to her father who is also seriously ill, and meditating on the difference between her life at her father's home and at her mother-in-law's.

The success of *Amadā Bata* rests chiefly on the characterization of Maya. No novelist, except Senapati, has created such a memorable female character. Patnaik has a simple straightforward style, with an exact sense of dialogue, and evokes family and domestic situations in all their beauty and vividness.

Surendra Mohanty (Surendra Mahānti, b. 1920) is a

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prolific writer who has published volumes of short stories, novels, essays and a history of Oriya literature. He has edited two Oriya dailies, the *Gaṇatantra* and the *Kaliṅga*, and is perhaps the greatest short-story writer of the fifties and sixties. He has also been considerably successful as a novelist and has won the Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel *Nīla Śaila* (The Blue Mountain, 1969). Of his six novels, *Andha Diganta* (The Blind Horizon, 1964) *Nīla Śaila*, *Kālāntara* (The End of an Epoch, 1973) and *Hansa Giti* (The Swan Song, 1975) are important works in contemporary Oriya fiction. *Andha Diganta* is a political novel which depicts the Indian society before and after Independence. Nidhi Das joins the Freedom Movement under the inspiration of Gandhi and sacrifices everything for the country and the cause dear to him. But after Independence, he is ignored by his friends and countrymen and dies unlamented in a village. *Nīla Śaila* is a historical novel set against 18th-century Orissa. Ramachandra Deva, the ruler of Khurda, falls in love with the daughter of the Muslim ruler of Cuttack. He converts to Islam and marries her. But when the Muslim ruler of Cuttack invades Khurda and aims at destroying the idol of Jagannath at Puri, worshipped by the people of Orissa, Ramachandra Deva fights bravely to protect the idol.

Nīla Śaila has been a best-seller in Orissa and has been translated into Hindi, Bengali and Malayalam. Written in a heavy Sanskritized style, it reads like a romantic tale of love, adventure and heroism. In theme, style and characterization *Nīla Śaila* is not significantly different from traditional historical novels. Its success may partly be due to the appeal of the Jagannatha theme to the Oriya people. Jagannatha (the Lord of the Universe) has been a constant source of inspiration to Oriya poets, authors and artists down the centuries.

A number of novelists published their works in the forties and the fifties and they cannot be said to belong either to the pre- or the post-Independence period exclusively. Though individually most of them do not have anything significant in theme or style, they have produced a considerable bulk of fiction and enriched Oriya literature. These novelists include Pranakrushna Samal (1912–59), Kamalakanta Das (b. 1906), Chandramani Das (1916–73), Lakshmidhar Nayak (b. 1914) and Faturananda (b. 1915).

Faturananda, a doctor by training, was a victim of leprosy in his youth and is now almost blind. But he has been entertaining the Oriya reading public with his humorous and farcical writings for the last twenty years or so. *Nākta Citrakār* (An Artist Without a Nose, 1967) is his only novel. It is the story of an artist, without a nose, who is in love with a pretty woman. He never gathers the courage to express his love to his beloved but draws a masterpiece, showing an ugly creature standing near a beautiful yellow bird, *haladibasanta*, which symbolizes youth and spring.

The Younger Novelists

The younger novelists living in a changed social milieu understandably write about problems different from those of their predecessors. Many of them are concerned with the situation of the individual in a society undergoing transition from a traditional village-oriented structure to a modern and technology-oriented one. They are recording the experience of a newly independent nation with democracy and socialism. Their familiarity with western philosophy, psychology and literature greatly influences the nature and quality of their work.

Shantanu Acharya (Śāntanu Ācārya, b. 1934) is perhaps the most prominent novelist of the post-Gopinath era, and has, among his readers, an equal number of admirers and detractors. He has also published several volumes of short stories and books for children on various aspects of science.

With the publication of his first novel *Nara-Kinnara* (Man and Half-Beast, 1962), Acharya made quite an impact on the novel-reading public of Orissa. The theme of *Nara-Kinnara* is the search for identity of an orphan boy, George, who lives in a slum and whose parents are described as the drain and banyan tree of a hospital.

Śatābdīra Nāciketa (The Nachiketa of the Century, 1965) and *Tinoti Rātira Sākala* (Dawn After Three Nights, 1969) are penetrating studies of the Indian society, particularly of the younger generation that is enthusiastic at the newly-gained freedom but lacks a sense of goal and direction. In *Dakhinābarta* (A Journey Towards South, 1973) Acharya suggests that an awareness of the spiritual heritage of India would solve some of the crises of the contemporary Indian society. *Jātrara Prathama Pāda* (The First Phase of the Journey, 1976), Acharya's latest novel, is about a girl who, as a child, worked as a volunteer to distribute water in a meeting of freedom fighters, but is later raped by the same freedom fighters. She then joins the Naxalite Movement in her womanhood.

Acharya has boldly questioned the accepted ideals of the post-Independence society. His themes have great contemporary significance and his images and insights are startlingly fresh. But in his attempt to mould the language to his purpose his novels give the impression of deliberateness. He is sometimes too descriptive and lacks a sense of focus.

Krushna Prasad Mishra (Kṛṣṇa Prasād Miśra, b. 1939) has published, so far, three novels besides several volumes of short stories, a travelogue and a collection of literary philosophical essays. A professor of philosophy, he also edits an Oriya monthly. Though better known as a short-story writer, Mishra's novels, especially *Siṅhakati* (A Woman with the Waist of a Lion, 1961) deserves critical attention. *Siṅhakati* is a maturer work than Mishra's two other novels, *Mṛugatruṣṇa* (The Mirage, 1958) and *Nepathya* (In the Background, 1962). However, all the three novels

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have love as the most dominant theme and depict the protagonist's aspiration towards higher values of life including a form of love that ennobles and enriches life.

Chandra Sekhar Rath (Candra Śekhara Ratha, b. 1929) has published two novels and a number of short stories and essays. His first novel, *Jantrārūḍha* (One who Rides a Machine, 1966) is a moving account on the life of a priest, Sanatana Das, seeking spiritual illumination. Rath writes idiomatic lyrical prose and reminds one of the style of Gopinath Mohanty. His second novel, *Asūrya Upaniveś* (The Sunless Colony, 1977), portraying the futility and meaninglessness of modern city life, is not as satisfactory as the first.

Mohapatra Neelamani Sahoo (Mahāpātra Nīlamaṇi Sāhū, b. 1926) is a leading short-story writer some of whose stories are as long as novellas. He has also published two novels, *Dhara O Dhara* (The World and Its Ways, 1961) and *Tāmasi Rādha* (Radha in the Dark, 1965). Both the novels have love and marriage as their theme. Though there is much in Sahoo that is conventional both in theme and style, he has an intimate understanding of human character and situation and probes deep into the human mind. He is among the most popular of contemporary authors but often lacks economy of expression and a sense of focus.

Other contemporary novelists include Gyanendra Verma, Gokulananda Mohapatra, Narasingha Sahoo, Satyananda Behura, Chandramani Das, Jogindra Kumar Mohanty, Udaya Chandra Mohapatra, Bibhuti Patnaik and Kanduri Charan Das. Bibhuti Patnaik is the most popular and the most prolific of these novelists. He writes mostly about the love between young men and women, an obvious and popular theme. Chandramani Das, Jogindra Kumar Mohanty and Kanduri Charan Das have written on themes mostly borrowed from western thrillers dealing with crime and murder. Gokulananda Mohapatra, a professor of chemistry, has the distinction of being the first and only novelist to write on scientific topics such as man's journey into space. His *Pṛthibi Bāhāre Maṇiṣa* (Man Outside the Earth), describing the travel of two human beings, Laura and Richardson, to Jupiter, was quite popular a decade ago. Jameshwar Mishra has made an interesting experiment by writing his only novel, *Khamari*, in the local dialect of Sambalpur (western Orissa).

Ganeswar Mishra (b. 1942) has published four novels, out of which *Samudrika* (One Who Belongs to the Sea, 1963) and *Netā* (The Leader, 1973) have been received well by critics. *Samudrika* is the story of a group of fishermen living on the coast of Puri. *Netā* records the pre-election days in the life of a leader, in a small town of Orissa.

Conclusion

Though no bibliography of Oriya novels is available, the total number of novels published so far could be around two thousand. Most of these are social novels dealing with family stories of coastal Orissa. Almost all Oriya novelists are from the coastal districts of Cuttack, Puri and Balasore and what we get as social pictures of Orissa are in fact the pictures of these districts only. Gopinath Mohanty's novels on tribal life are, however, significant exceptions.

In spite of Fakirmohan Senapati and Gopinath Mohanty, who can easily be taken as major Indian novelists, Oriya fiction cannot be said to be considerably rich. The Oriya genius seems to have expressed itself better in the form of poetry than in prose. It is difficult to find two dozen novels which could be said to be of first-rate quality. Neither in theme nor in style do we find much variety in Oriya novels. It is also a matter of concern that the number of novels published in recent years has been steadily going down.

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Punjabi

GURCHARAN SINGH

Introduction

As a result of the 1849 Anglo-Sikh war, the Sikh Punjab was annexed to British India. This eventually led to the development of a modern Punjabi language and literature under the protracted but indirect cultural impact of the English language. Among the new forms that took shape was the novel, which made its appearance towards the close of the 19th century. Bengali, Urdu and, to some extent, Hindi too had progressed on these modern lines much earlier and fiction came to Punjabi mainly through these languages.

The Pioneer. British India witnessed a general uprising against foreign rule in 1857. When this was suppressed, the rulers began to stir up communal strife to ensure their stability in India. It was they who prompted Hindu, Muslim and Sikh movements throughout the country to compete for British patronage. To offset the Hindu Sabha and the Muslim Aligarh revivalists, a similar Sikh movement, the Singh Sabha, sprang up in the Punjab in the 1870s. It popularized the use of the Punjabi language and sought to develop it on modern lines. Symptomatic of the language's progress was the first original Punjabi novel, *Sundarī*, written in 1897 by Bhai Vir Singh, the chief architect of the Singh Sabha. Bhai Vir Singh was the central figure of the group that gave to Punjabi the novel of the Sikh renaissance which the Singh Sabha movement engendered and nurtured till the third decade of the 20th century. These novels, about the Sikhs, for the Sikhs, extolled Sikh history and character of the 18th century, when both had shone in their pristine glory. Bhai Vir Singh and his group imitated the form of Urdu novel used by such Muslim revivalist authors as Nazir Ahmed, Sharar and Rashidul Khairi, who were influenced by the Muslim Aligarh movement.

The Successor. Nanak Singh (b. 1897) marks the next stage in the development of the Punjabi novel. He was preoccupied with social reformation according to his peculiarly bourgeois concepts up to as late as the sixties of the 20th century. Though he had started writing early and had written his first novelette in 1921 it was 1932 before he celebrated his first novel, *Citta Lahū* (Blood Gone White). Several novels followed, giving Punjabi readers some of the most gripping fiction that, at the same time, dealt with the ethical values of contemporary Sikh society in the Punjab.

By Nanak Singh's time the Singh Sabha movement and Sikh revivalism had run their course. The start of the 20th century saw the formation of a radical group (Gadar Party) of Indian immigrants in the U.S.A. Soon it had gathered in its fold Punjabi Sikhs all over the globe. The loosely knit Gadar Organization struck as soon as the First World War broke out, but striking prematurely it lost heavily in men and material. Forced recruitment during the war also resulted in public unrest mounting in the Punjab countryside. The breaking point came in 1919, on Baisakhi day (13 April), when crowds protesting against martial law atrocities were shot down in the gory Jalianwalla massacre. As a result the Singh Sabha movement was replaced by anti-British nationalism and Bhai Vir Singh was virtually replaced by Nanak Singh.

The non-violent, non-cooperation Gandhian Congress movement, the passive resistance by the Sikhs for the reform of Gurdwara managements (the Akali Movement) and the terrorist movement led by Bhagat Singh and his revolutionary comrades-in-arms, all contributed the background for Nanak Singh's novels of Gandhian nationalism and middle-class reformation. By the time he launched into a career as a novelist (1932), Punjab was already in a ferment and he became the story-teller of revolt.

The Third Stage. By 1936 another trend had also set in. A socialist view of society engendered by the Communist revolution in Russia (1917) had found a firm base in the Sikh peasantry of the Punjab. It was a view that was also reflected by the Progressive Movement in literature. The impact on the Punjabi writing of such progressives as Sant Singh Sekhon, Gurcharan Singh, Surinder Singh Narula, Mohan Singh and many others, right from the late thirties till at least two decades after Partition, was tremendous.

It was at Lahore in 1940 that the All India Muslim League passed its historic resolution demanding the partition of the subcontinent. The consequence was the division of the Punjab into two in 1947, an act accompanied by wholesale slaughter and the uprooting of minorities on both sides of the newly drawn border. Nanak Singh and his tribe, who had all along harped so pathetically on the theme of Hindu-Muslim unity, were stunned by the satanic carnage. But the necessity to think of other solutions for the maladies that beset the Punjab, created a new group of writers. Among them was Surinder Singh Narula, the social-realist, who attracted attention with his maiden novel *Pio-Putar* (Father and Son) in 1946. Short stories of this kind had appeared earlier; but this was the first novel that proved to

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be totally different from Nanak Singh's work. Partition came a year later and in its wake came more novels from Narula, earning for him greater recognition than Nanak Singh.

The decade immediately following Partition proved very productive in the world of letters. New novelists flooded the market with all kinds of works of fiction, most of these being of a high standard. Their work led to the present literary scene, which is dominated by the concept of socialist realism that was first initiated in the pre-Partition Punjab.

The Age of Bhai Vir Singh

As stated earlier Bhai Vir Singh wrote the first novel in Punjabi, *Sundarī* (1897). There had been, before this pioneering effort, several romances and adventures full of miraculous happenings that had been translated from the Urdu. The language of these stories was undeveloped, and the readership limited. Works like *Bhūt Nāth* and *Candar Kānta* were published first to contribute to the scanty literature in Punjabi. Then came titillating stories of female vagaries like *Totāmaina* (Parrot and Mynah), in which sex was blatantly discussed since most of the stories catered to male readers.

With the Singh Sabha movement there came a lot of new and original Sikh writing. A significant contribution to this renaissance was Bhai (the prefix Bhai means Brother, a title of love and veneration given to Sikh men of religious disposition) Vir Singh's *Sundarī* (the name of the heroine, meaning 'The Pretty One'). He followed this work with *Bijay Singh* (1899) and *Satwant Kaur*. All these novels were written with a purpose and for a particular type of readership, mainly the Sikhs. Taking this cue, writers like Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Bhai Amar Singh and S. S. Charan Singh Shahid turned to novel writing and enlarged the scope of the novel as such. They were, however, all wedded to extolling Sikh history and character and urging the revival of the Sikh way of life. This was the common feature of all the novels of the Singh Sabha period, whether they were historical, social or of mixed nature.

Bhai Vir Singh endeavoured to create an ideal Sikh hero (or heroine)—be it Sundari, Bijay Singh, Satwant Kaur or the nondescript Baba Naudh Singh, who was his last hero and appeared in 1924—for emulation by his readers. The story content in every book of his is fragile. A loose frame-work is filled with stereotyped Sikh, Hindu and Muslim characters who give long discourses on the Sikh faith, character and history. These are supplemented with addresses to the reader by the author. The narrative is regularly interrupted, often by the intervention of the supernatural. *Sundarī*, *Bijay Singh* and *Satwant Kaur* are parts of a trilogy dealing with 18th-century Sikh history, when the mighty Moghuls were resisted by the Sikhs. And Bhai Vir Singh uses them as a convenient vehicle for missionary work.

Working out a plot would seem to be beyond Bhai Vir Singh. If history is removed from *Sundarī*, the entire plot is reduced to a succession of abductions and escapes. *Bijay Singh* and *Satwant Kaur* are only slightly better in this respect.

Bāba Naudh Singh, the fourth work, is, however, in a category by itself, having nothing in common with the trilogy. It is very difficult to describe *Bāba Naudh Singh* as a novel in the formal sense, for the book, when first published, appeared in two volumes and was a collection of a number of tracts that had first been published by the Sikh Tract Society in Amritsar to popularize the Singh Sabha ideas. Bhai Vir Singh's hero in these tracts was Baba Naudh Singh.

It was the compulsions of the time that provided character to the writings of Bhai Vir Singh. He wrote with a set purpose, for a chosen readership at a particular juncture in the history of Punjab. This circumscribed his range, but till the end of his days he was content with being the spokesman and preacher of the Singh Sabha movement.

Later Contemporaries. S. S. Charan Singh Shaheed (1893–1935), Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid and Bhai Amar Singh were later contemporaries of Bhai Vir Singh who became active novelists. Taking their cue from Bhai Vir Singh, they also took the Punjabi novel forward into the early twenties of this century. They were far more concerned with the form of the novel than Bhai Vir Singh was. They paid greater attention to story interest in order to please a growing readership outside the orbit of the Singh Sabha movement. These writers were the first to be influenced by the English novel, of course indirectly, via the Urdu and, to some extent, the Hindi novel.

The very first literary influence on S. S. Charan Singh was Bhai Vir Singh, on whose newspaper he worked for some time. He was still a raw youth when he hurriedly wrote those pseudo-historical novels—*Daler Kaur* (Courageous Lady, 1911), *Ranjīt Kaur* (Victorious Lady, 1913) and *Cañcal Mūrtī* (Cleverness Incarnate, 1915). These three books were similar in form and content and had Sikh heroism as their common theme. They portrayed once again the 18th-century Punjab of the Sikh resistance.

Charan Singh followed this phase with *Do Wahuṭīān* (Two Wives), a novel with a domestic theme. This was a real departure from the beaten track. Then, after a small gap, came *Ṣām Sundar*, *Jagat Tamāśā* (The World is a Fair, 1927), *Kaun Jittia* (Who Won), *Jogan Jādūgarnī* (Jogan, the Magician), etc. These were pure romances, full of good-hearted humour and miraculous happenings. They share with his first novels the decisive role of coincidence, exotic happenings and the intervention of the supernatural to resolve crises or create suspense. While *Daler Kaur*, *Ranjīt*

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Kaur and *Cañcal Mūrtī* are all stories of adventure with devout Sikhs as heroes, *Do Wahuṭīān* moves from social reform to pure romance, losing in the process its Sikh complexion.

Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid's *Śreṣṭ Kulan Di Cal* (The Ways of Noble Families,), *Subhāg Kaur* (The Lady of Good Fortune,), *Dampati Piār* (Married Love) and some later works are all 'novels of Sikh social reform', patterned on the Urdu novels of the Muslim revivalists. Bhai Mohan Singh was actually provoked to write *Śreṣṭ Kulan Di Cāl* by an 'anti-Sikh, anti-Punjabi and anti-Punjab' book, *Sat Kulacharan*. In Mohan Singh's novel, three generations of an ideal Sikh family are portrayed, leading an exemplary Sikh life. This excessive preoccupation with setting an example has damaged the book, the didactic element almost killing the artistic aspect of the novel. Nevertheless, it is an improvement on Bhai Vir Singh's novels.

Bhai Amar Singh and others wrote similar stuff in the days of the Punjabi novel's infancy. His *Ghar Da Nirlah* (Running a Household, 1907) is noteworthy. Although it deals with a Sikh household, most of the problems with which it comes to grips are shared by families of non-Sikhs too. This early Punjabi novel thus anticipated the time when the Punjabi novel would deal with generalized themes concerning society as a whole. The trend thus set progressed with the later works of Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Charan Singh Shaheed and Amar Singh. *Sulakhi Dhi* (A Good Daughter, 1911), *Suchajji Dhi* (Competent Daughter) and *Suchajji Mom* (The Efficient Mother) a trilogy by Amar Singh, is a good example of this trend.

The Age of Nanak Singh

The First World War, when the Punjab contributed over half a million soldiers to the British fighting forces, was followed by the Jalianwalla Bagh holocaust. The outcome was a change in the Punjabi creative outlook. Themes based on inter-communal rivalry gave way to stirring stories of nationalism.

The non-cooperation movement and the Muslim Khilafat movement joined hands against the British. An offshoot was the Sikh Gurdwara Reform movement that was active until 1924. Nanak Singh took part in the Akali movement and was imprisoned with thousands of others. Inside the jail he turned to writing novels. He too was a writer with a mission, yet his work was totally different from Bhai Vir Singh's. The experiences which moulded his psychology enabled him to write the first novel of Sikh humanism and pioneer a genre that has survived to this day.

The First Phase (1921–32). Nanak Singh's first phase started with *Pāp Dī Khaṭṭī* (The Wages of Sin,) and ended with the publication of *Ciṭṭa Lahū* (The Blood Gone White) in 1932. In between came *Sūlān Dī Sej* (The Bed of Thorns, 1933), *Matreī Māṅ* (Stepmother), *Kāl Cakkar* (The Wheel of Time), *Miṭhā Mauhrā* (The Sweet Poison) and *Prem Saṅgīt* (Music of Love, 1945). This was almost a period of adolescence, as Nanak Singh experimented with and learned the techniques of novel writing. He took almost a decade to perfect his art.

When in jail, Nanak Singh read the famous Urdu novelist Munshi Prem Chand and was influenced by him. Prem Chand, a humanist, stood for a Gandhian egalitarianism. Nanak Singh was a Sikh who found Gandhism compatible with Sikh humanism. He reacted to the developing social environment around him in this dual spirit and wrote his novels in this vein.

Ciṭṭa Lahū marked the end of the first phase, but is, in fact, a novel of transition and should really fall into the next phase of Nanak Singh's creativity.

Unlike Nanak Singh's earlier creations, which are tragi-comedies of social romance, *Ciṭṭa Lahū* is an unrelieved tragedy. In this novel he takes up the social theme in all its forms and denounces the inhumanity prevalent among individuals, classes and professions in contemporary Punjabi society. The Akali, the Singh Sabha and the nationalistic movements of social reform are all considered, but the hero in the end has to fight a lone and ineffectual battle against the villainous forces of inhumanity, eventually dying on the battlefield. In *Ciṭṭa Lahū*, Nanak Singh becomes a skilled craftsman who weaves a powerful story that exposes and ridicules the moral purists, the self-aggrandising communalists, the practitioners of untouchability, the exploiters of religion and other such base persons who masquerade as noble saints and men of God.

The Second Phase. *Faulādī Phul* (The Tender Steel) was published in 1935. Then came *Kāgtāṅ Dī Beṛī* (The Paper Boat, 1936), *Piār Di Duniyā* (The World of Love, 1946), *Dhundle Parchamen* (The Dull Shadows), *Love Marriage* (1945), *Garīb Di Duniyā* (The Poor Man's World, 1949), *Adh Khiṛiā Phūl* (The Half-blown Flower, 1948), *Pavittar Pāpī* (The Pious Sinner), *Jīvan Saṅgrām* (Life Struggle, 1950) and *B.A. Pass* (1944). All these novels of the second phase immortalized Nanak Singh as a Punjabi novelist. With *Ṭūṭṭi Vīṇa* (The Broken Vina, 1945), *Gaṅgā Jali Wā* *Śarāb* (Liquor in Pure Container) and *Dūr Kinārā* (The Far-off Shore, 1948) he touches 1947, the fateful year of Independence and bloody Partition.

Faulādī Phul carries an explanatory subtitle: 'an educative novel on social reformation'. This sets the theme. Religious fanaticism is condemned as inhuman. The usual condemnations of elderly marriage, the flesh trade, etc. are to be found in abundance. But, all the same, Nanak Singh's point of view comes across as that of a conservative traditionalist.

Kāgtāṅ Dī Beṛī is a story of breath-taking suspense. In it is the usual triangle—the hero, the heroine and the villain—

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but the resolution comes through the quite irrational conversion of the last named one.

Nanak Singh's first decisive step towards dissidence, however, came with *Piār Di Duniyā* and the book that followed it. By this time Nanak Singh had come under the influence of Sardar Gurbux Singh Preet Lari, a magician with words and ideas and a writer who could argue convincingly in favour of the modern view of social conduct and such concepts as love, marriage, equality and communal and caste relations. Nanak Singh found a complete answer to his quest for a new social order in the teachings of Gurbux Singh Preet Lari—the suffix 'Preet Lari' (love string, literally) is a reference to the monthly magazine of that name which Gurbux Singh founded and edited. Under this influence, love became the guiding principle of Nanak Singh and was reflected in such novels of his as *Adh Khiṛiā Phūl*, *Piār Di Duniyā* and *Garīb Di Duniyā*, etc.

Adh Khiṛiā Phūl is, perhaps, the one novel by Nanak Singh in which coincidence is minimal and romance and sentiment are replaced by stark realism. This is because the novel is autobiographical and the purely imaginary has been drastically reduced. In *Piār Di Duniyā*, on the other hand, the theme of universal love is stretched to unbelievable limits. The complications are resolved by resorting to conversion or physical reduction of the characters. In *Gārīb Di Duniyā*, a rich industrialist's son is genuinely in love with a labourer's daughter and is, therefore, shown as being liberal to the working people and affectionate to their children. The novelist underplays the class conflict and merely demonstrates an abundance of compassion for the poor.

In *Piār Di Duniyā* Nanak Singh also touches upon the theme of patriotism. But his treatment of it is casual and inept. The hero, Sundar Das, is a preaching Gandhian, but he does nothing for his country except dissuade Pushpa a pretty pistol-wielding terrorist, from resorting to arms. Instead, he persuades her to marry him, thus putting her effectively out of action. Then again, in *Adh Khiṛiā Phūl*, Kuldip Singh is a political prisoner, yet he is without any political consciousness. This is the case even with Waryam Singh, another character in the novel. Nanak Singh, it would seem, sometimes makes his characters talk in patriotic terms (in novels written before 1950), merely to announce the author's concern for his motherland and nothing more.

Then there is the constant theme of human oneness in his novels. Muslim characters are invariably shown as noble and good friends, steadfast and sacrificing. This is because his readers were Sikhs and he wanted them to be free of bias against Muslims, their fellow-beings. This is just one of the many aspects of love that Nanak Singh writes about. In *Love Marriage*, a Punjabi novel with an English name, the merits and demerits of arranged and love marriages are looked at critically with the verdict going in favour of love marriage, but with the full approval of enlightened parents. In *Dūr Kinārā*, the theme is filial love which Nanak Singh romanticizes too much.

Ṭūṭṭi Vīṇa and *Gaṅgā Jali Wic Śarāb* are two linked novels. The former is the story of a grandmother and a mother, while the latter deals with the mother and her daughter. The heroine of *Ṭūṭṭi Vīṇa*, Satya, is a prostitute who is redeemed by Ganga Ram, a young idealist, who marries her. But their marriage brings such suffering that they are driven to suicide. In the second novel, the heroine is no longer a practising member of the flesh-trade, yet she is prevented on all sides from entering the respectable mainstream of society. Nanak Singh had perhaps wanted to evoke compassion for such fallen women but he succeeds only in causing dismay and frustration. The responsibility of society for allowing matters to come to such a gloomy pass is, however, brought out.

The Partition Phase. Partition and its tragic consequences threatened Nanak Singh's indomitable optimism. But he refused to give up hope. *Khūn De Sohile* (The Eulogy of Blood, 1949) and *Agg Dī Kheḍ* (The Arson Game, 1948), both written just after Partition, are two linked novels. In them, Nanak Singh's heroic Sikh and Muslim characters fight last ditch battles against overwhelming odds and would rather perish fighting than give in to inhumanity.

Mañjhdhār (Midstream, 1950), another Nanak Singh novel of this period, has a dual theme. The novel considers the sharp fall in moral values of the politician in the Indian Punjab as he lusts for power. The novel also considers feminine sexual morality in the changed circumstances.

Cittarkār (The Artist, 1951) followed *Mañjhdhār*. In it Nanak Singh spells out his own version of the ideal artist. His man of art is one who creates neither to earn bread nor for publicity or personal prestige but because he worships his art like God Himself. This does not mean that he is a votary of 'Art merely for Art's Sake'; Nanak Singh's artist is an architect of the country and its culture. He emphasizes that good art is born of a noble artist, like the hero of this novel.

Nanak Singh's novels of this period acquire a semi-historical aspect, providing as they do realistic details of the conditions on the Indian side of the Wahga border shortly after Partition. In these novels he comments freely on contemporary developments, but always from the standpoint of his characteristic humanistic idealism.

The Last Phase. From 1947 onwards Nanak Singh was a shaken man, trying to uphold his idealism against mounting odds. *Khūn De Sohile* and *Agg Dī Kheḍ* marked the transition to the final phase of his career, when he wrote *Kaṭṭī Hoī Paṭaṅg* (The Kite in a Storm, 1953), *Suman Kāntā* (the name of the heroine, 1952), *Ādam Khor* (Man-eater, 1953), *Nasoar* (The Weeping Sour), *Bañjar* (Wasteland),

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Pūjāri (The Priest), *Āstik Nāstik* (The Believer and the Non-believer), *Chalāwa* (The Illusion), *Gagan Damama Bājia* (The Beat of the War Drum) and *Ikk Miān Do Talwārān* (The Incompatible Two). In these novels he demonstrated that he had acquired a facile pen and the ability to link contemporary reality with the stories he wove.

Novel followed novel in quick succession. His novels became longer as well as more varied in theme. He grappled with new problems and was obliged to discuss the old, now fast-changing moral values. In *Kaṭṭī Hoī Paṭaṅg* he created three different types of female characters in three different situations. In *Ādam Khor*, Nanak Singh is far less sentimental and far more realistic than in *Garīb Di Duniyā*, discussing the problem of man's exploitation by man (under the capitalist system) with far greater insight. But, he betrayas a visionary's wishfulness when he suggests a solution. In advocating a non-violent educative campaign as the way to salvation he is much more with Vinoba Bhave than with either Marx or Lenin.

His later novels show Nanak Singh on the decline. In *Saṅgam* (The Junction), he seems to be getting over his affinity for the time-honoured conservative husband-wife relationship. Two sisters exchange husbands in order to lead a more satisfactory married life. He engenders this cross-union of the compatibles by considering the original marital arrangements as being wrong and immoral!

Bañjar and *Pūjāri* bring into focus the developing Hindu-Sikh tensions in the newly formed Indian Punjab. In these two novels, Nanak Singh advocates the emotional integration of the two sister-communities. *Āstik Nāstik* is an exposure of the so-called believers in God. It reveals the essential godliness of those who do not profess to be believers in the same loud tones.

The great Nanak Singh epoch ended towards the close of the sixties. His was a titanic literary struggle against all that was inhuman, barbaric, exploitative and derogatory to human beings. His fiction may have lacked that perspicacity and incisive insight into the working of human institutions that lead to correct diagnosis and treatment. Almost all his life he traded in sentimental emotionalism and wishful thinking, with nothing concrete or revolutionary to offer as a solution to the abiding ills of the people of the Punjab. But he did give the Punjabi language a full-blooded novel, developing it, over a period of almost half a century, from its very beginnings.

Surinder Singh Narula and Others

It was in 1946 that Surinder Singh Narula (b. 1917), a postgraduate in English, published his first novel, *Pio-Puttar* (Father and Son, 1946). With it was born a new type of Punjabi novel, different in all aspects from Nanak Singh's well-plotted formula novels.

Narula entered the arena of Punjabi fiction like a crusader and emerged triumphant, carving out for himself a special niche in Punjabi literary history as a realist of progressive outlook. His works are bereft of sentimentalism, being down-to-earth descriptions of people, and their thinking. He knows the dialectics of social change and uses this knowledge in his narration. Narula's predecessors, Bhai Vir Singh, Mohan Singh Vaid, S. S. Charan Singh and Nanak Singh, may have been city-bred, but it was Surinder Singh Narula alone who portrayed city life in all its details, Amritsar being the main city for his exercise. He described petty traders and shopkeepers, their women, the vagrants and riff-raff, their homes and the lanes, by-lanes and zigzag streets of the city of his birth. He knows them all well and presents them in close-up, one 'still' following another in almost constant succession. His concern with naked reality prevents him from manipulating the story. He does not believe in concocted situations, artificial twists and turns and a neat rounding-off at the end. At first, Narula was generally considered as lacking in the art of 'novel-making', in the sense Nanak Singh was a 'novel-maker'. He has, however, improved with time and mastered the technique of story-telling. At the same time, he has refused to compromise his dedication to realism and verisimilitude.

In *Pio-Puttar*, as well as in his next novel *Raṅg Maha-* (The Pleasure Palace, 1950) a gloomy atmosphere prevails from beginning to end, despite occasional flashes of humour, wit and satire. His later novels, however, brightened.

Narula is a Marxist, in that, like other Indian literary progressives, he has adopted a Marxist approach to literature and society. He was the first Punjabi to write a novel in this vein. *Pio-Puttar* virtually narrates the story of Amritsar from 1896 to 1918. The story begins with the anti-British Namdhari (a sect of the Sikhs) movement in which the father of the protagonist had participated, leading to his self-exile in North America whence a large number of Sikh peasants had migrated in search of livelihood. The descriptions of the social, economic and political conditions in the city form the background to the story. The tyrannical rule of the British, the slow but steady rise of Indian capitalism and the beginnings of nationalistic ferment are narrated with convincing detail through several characters who develop with the story. Many real happenings are described and they make the overall picture more comprehensive and lifelike.

Raṅg Mahal has been described as a blend of Marxist analysis and Freudian interpretation. This was trend-setting at its best. The title is the name of the residence of a retired civil servant who, because of ill-gotten gains and depravity, reduces the so-called 'palace of pleasure' to a house of suffering. His wife, son and daughters suffer. The family disintegrates, some committing suicide, others becoming perverted. Those who 'survive' are 'rescued' by a trade-unionist and his cohorts.

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Jāgratā (The Night-long Vigil, 1950) is a novelette about the economic depression of 1923–29 and its effect on the mill hands of Amritsar. The story sketches in bold relief the ruthless exploitation of the workers by their employers. In *Dīn Te Dunīyā* (World and Beyond 1951), on the other hand, he describes the rise of capitalism in India and the class conflict that develops as the new proletariat prepares to fight for its rights. With *Lok Duśman* (People's Enemy, 1952) Narula ventures into the Punjabi countryside (Malwa) and, on the whole, makes a good job of writing about it. Realizing his city-bred difficulties in writing accurately about non-urban Punjabi life, he has avoided detail. The feudal landlord-tenant relationship is, however, clearly depicted and makes for Narula's success in this venture. *Nīlī Bār* (a canal settlement in West Punjab, 1952) is a similar work. It is full of geographical errors, yet carries the stamp of reality about it. The theme of the book is the dispossession of the natives of the Nili Bar area by the new colonizers, who usurp their lands and reduce the real owners to serfdom.

In *Jag Biti* (The Impersonal Story, 1954) Narula reverts to Amritsar, the scene of his early life, and spans three generations. His aim here is to show how it is mainly economic factors that govern and shape the political, social and cultural milieu. He portrays old feudal relationships and values yielding place to monetary relationships and a bourgeois system of values. *Dil Darya* (The Heart is a River) is a pleasant contrast to *Jag Biti*. Its meticulously woven and well-rounded plot centres on the multidimensional love-game a middle-class artist plays with as many as four middle-class women, from different sectors of the business world. The narrative, with the inhuman genocide of the Partition days as its background, is a scathing denunciation of the tattered values of the upper middle classes who refuse to shed these values as the human situation around them undergoes a drastic change. Only a year after *Dil Darya* came *Sil Aluni* (Hard as a Rock) which takes the *Pio-Puttar* story a step forward and describes the Sikh morcha (passive resistance) launched to obtain Gurdwara management reform. This Akali movement followed the Congress non-cooperation stir of 1921–22. It was not communal and stood firmly for united Hindu, Muslim and Sikh unity to expel the foreigner. In *Gallan Din Rāt Diyān* (Talks of Days and Nights, 1966) Narula shows how the new money-mad bourgeois earns only unhappiness and grief from its reckless pursuit of material gains, and again takes the capitalistic system to task for its injury to human values.

Narula has been consistent in his approach to the art of novel writing and in his content. His contribution to the Punjabi novel will ever remain significant.

Between Nanak and Narula. During the long years when Nanak Singh ruled the literary roost and before Surinder Singh Narula arrived to make his impact, there were some stray works that are noteworthy novels. *Prem Lagan* (Love Longings, 1934) by Master Tara Singh, the leader of the Sikhs during the Akali movement and for a long time afterwards, has for its background the Gurdwara reform movement. It is fleshed out with a story built around the sturdy Jat Sikh peasantry of the central Punjab. Another novel by the same author is *Bāba Tejā Singh* (the name of the hero). This brief novel describes the Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845 and 1849 and analyzes the reasons for the Sikh failure. Mention should also be made of I. C. Nanda's two novels, *Tej Kaur* (the name of a Sikh lady) published in the 1920s and *Murād* (name of a Muslim young man) published in 1943.

In 1951 came Gurcharan Singh's epoch-making *Vagdī Sī Rāvī* (There Flows the Ravi). This is a novel that was different. It resembles neither Nanak Singh's work nor his anti-type, Surinder Singh Narula's. It is a breath-taking romance, a realistic love story of two lovers who belong to widely different stations in life. They are surrounded by inhibitions and prohibitions that eventually crush them. The girl is the daughter of a feudal chief while the boy is an educated unemployed young man, physically weak and emotionally disturbed. It describes one year (1940–41) of the young man's struggle for love and livelihood in exotic surroundings in the western Punjab. It is a well-constructed, autobiographical narrative written in a racy style.

Sant Singh Sekhon (b. 1905), a theorist of the progressive school, wrote *Lahū Miṭṭi* (Blood and Soil, 1949), a piece of realistic fiction that describes in patch-work fashion, the life-style of the peasants who had migrated to the canal colonies of western Punjab. The typical family described was the author's, which gave it an authentic touch.

Mention should also be made of Kartar Singh Duggal's maiden novel *Āndrām* (Intestines, 1949). In it he describes the rural poor of Pothohar on naturalistic lines and adopts a Freudian approach to his characterizations. Giani Kesar Singh wrote *Lehr Wadhdi Gai* (The Movement Catches on), *Jaṅgi Qaidi* (Prisoner of War) and *Udhām Singh* (the hero who shot Sir Michael O' Dwyer, the villain of Jalianwalla Bagh). These novels, set against international backgrounds and describing the Indian freedom struggle in places outside India are a category apart. Giani Bhajan Singh and Sadhu Singh Hamdard wrote semi-historical novels in the style of Bhai Vir Singh.

Amrita Pritam (b. 1919), is a prose stylist whose writing has a very feminine lyrical flavour. She has been called the novelist of urban middle-class sensibility. *Ālhṇā* (The Nest, 1952), her fourth novel, is particularly noteworthy. Like the earlier three, it is a story of good people coming to grief at the hands of the butcher society. In *Ikk Swāl* (A Question) she testifies that love in the present social system is an impossibility. Amrita is essentially a poet even when writing fiction.

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Surjit Singh Sethi started writing novels quite early, but his main love has been playwriting. Thus there is plenty of the dramatic and the theatrical in all his novels, each of which is different in style, theme and treatment. Beginning with *Janta Jāgi* (The Popular Awakening, 1955), he wrote *Ret Da Pahāṛ* (The Sandy Mountain, 1954) and *Ikk Śehr Di Gal* (The Tale of a City) in which he vividly depicts the rotten upper-class life of Bombay. *Ret Da Pahāṛ* is about a dancing girl who marries for money. Her lust for material gains ends in a series of failures and frustrations. Then came *Kandhi utte Rukhra* (The River Side Tree, 1956) and *Ikk Khāli Piāla* (An Empty Bowl, 1960), each a new experiment in style and treatment. He creates panoramas of incidents that follow each other in a rush, but these, sometimes, invest his stories with an unreal atmosphere. After *Āndrām*, Duggal wrote *Nauh Te Mās* (Flesh and Blood, 1951). In 1960 he published his trilogy, *Hal Muridan Da* (Woes of the Faithful), and came to the forefront of Punjabi novelists. Duggal writes about the sons of the soil, generally belonging, to the north-west, now Pakistani Punjab, an area called Pothohar. The role of superstition and the supernatural in their daily lives is described in such a manner as to induce the reader to 'suspend disbelief' in the Coleridgeian sense.

The Modern Writers

Jaswant Singh Kanwal. Jaswant Singh Kanwal (b. 1921), a peasant from the Malwa tract, writes with sympathy and understanding about life in the villages of this area. He turned to socialism for his political faith and was considered a novelist of the progressive movement.

In *Pūraṇ Māśī* (Night of the Full Moon, 1950), his first novel after Partition, Kanwal speaks lyrically of the poetry of the Malwa countryside. He introduces in this novel his favourite character—a man of superior wisdom, moral rectitude and communistic convictions who acts as guide, philosopher and friend to the heroes and heroines of his novels. Adopting Nanak Singh as his model, Kanwal often resorts to coincidence and unusual contrivances.

His *Rāt Bāki Hai* (It is Night Still) deals with the peasant insurrections of the post-Partition years in those Punjab areas where native rulers had ruled during British times. The hero, a young revolutionary peasant, is tortured to death by police midway through the struggle. Of all Kanwal's novels, this is the most truly socialistic and realistic. *Civil Lines* (1956), on the other hand, takes the reader away from the rural scene to an urban setting and the white-collared lower middle class. It is also a romance, more or less of the Nanak Singh school. *Rūp Dhāra* (Flow of Beauty) narrates the struggles of a peasant-born orphan girl who, seeking liberty, imbibes the Communist faith. *Hani* (Of the Same Age) deals with the woes and sufferings of the workers and the poorest in the Punjab villages while *Itihās Juāb Māṅgda Hai* (History Demands an Answer) debates the options before the Communist revolutionaries and describes the rifts and internal strife in their world in the post-Stalin era. *Lahū Di Lo* (Blood that Shines) goes to the other extreme, supporting the liquidation-of-the-upper-class-enemy line of the Naxalites.

Narinder Pal Singh. Another important name in modern Punjabi fiction is Narinder Pal Singh (b. 1922). *Malāh* (The Boatman, 1948) and *Saināpati* (The Commander, 1949), two romances, were followed by *Untālī Warhe* (39 Years) in 1951. Thus, he made an earlier start than Narula but unlike the latter wallowed in sentimental romanticism in the pre-1947 period. In *Śaktī* (Power, 1952) and *Tria Jāl* (The Feminine Snare), both post-Partition novels, Narinder Pal Singh is a feminist propagating a new deal for the fair sex. *Aman De Rāh* (The Passage to Peace) which appeared at the end of the Second World War supports the world peace movements of those times. In *Ik Rāh Ik Paḍā* (A Path and a Stage, 1953), Narinder Pal Singh's hero is at the crossroads debating his future. He decides against narrow religious bigotism and opts for rational liberalism.

It was in 1957–58 that Narinder Pal Singh published his historical masterpiece—a trilogy—consisting of *Khannion Tīkhhi* (Sharper than the Sword), *Walon Nikki* (Thinner than the Hair) and *Et Mārg Jāṅa* (This Way to Go)—which narrates the saga of the Sikh revolt against the mighty Moghul power and its successors in the 18th century, the slow rise and consolidation of Sikh power, and then its tragic failure by the middle of 19th century. The two Anglo-Sikh wars of 1845 and 1849 are the subject of a separate volume, *Ik Sarkār Bajhon* (In the Absence of the Ruler). With these four historical novels on post-Guru Gobind Singh Sikh history, Narinder Pal Singh established himself as the most accomplished Punjabi historical novelist up to his time. But it was for his controversial novel *Ba Mulahiza Hośiār* (You are Being Warned) that Narinder Pal Singh won the Sahitya Akademi Award. In it he is a moralizer describing the decay, depravity and perversions that the Indian society is likely to fall into in the near future.

Sohan Singh Seetal. Sohan Singh Seetal turned to novel writing in the post-Partition period. He belonged to a village just across the new border in Lahore district and, when displaced, settled in Ludhiana. He began prolifically as a novelist, writing *Mul Dā Mās* (The Purchased Flesh, 1949), *Vijogan* (In Separation, 1951), *Dīve Dī Lo* (The Midnight Lamp, 1953), *Andhi Sundarta* (The Blind Beauty), *Badla* (Revenge) in quick succession. All his works had wonderfully well-wrought plots and the Nanak Singh appeal, something that was lacking in almost all the other Punjabi novelists except, perhaps, Jaswant Singh Kanwal. The conflict of the old and the new is described for the first time *Patwante Qātil* (The Honourable Killers) and

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in his most celebrated novel, *Jaṅg Te Aman* (War and Peace). Then came *Tūtan Wala Khūh* (Mulberry Well), *Ichogil Nehr Tak* (Up to Ichogil Canal, 1966), *Jug Badal Giya* (Changed Times, 1971) and *Juālāmukhi* (Volcano, 1972). These novels were fuller in scope than his earlier works. At the same time, the novelist was critical of the contemporary historical process and gradually moved from pure humanism to socialist realism in his novels. Seetal is a master of gripping story-telling and is an adept at describing geographical locales.

Gurdial Singh (b. 1933), a schoolteacher-turned-novelist, and Hari Singh Dilbar, also in the teaching profession, are two others who should be mentioned for their contribution to the modern Punjabi novel. Gurdial Singh, with *Marhi Da Diva* (Cremation Lamp), *Anhoae* (As Good as Unborn) and a few other pieces, established himself as a spokesman for the rural and urban have-nots. Hari Singh Dilbar, primarily a short-story writer, turned to novel writing with *Nadiān De Wehn* (River Courses) and *Bahen Jinnah Di Pakriye* (To Whom You Pledge Friendship). In these Dilbar paints with wonderful perspicacity and detail the sorrows and sufferings of the village-folk of his home district, Ludhiana.

Jagjit Brar, Niranjan Tasnim, Mohan Singh Kahlon, Manjit Rana, Sukhbir, Harnam Das Sehraie, Surinder Singh Johar, Santokh Singh Dhir and Buta Singh are others who have made valuable contributions to the Punjabi novel in the past.

At present, however, there seems to be a vacuum in this genre. The stalwarts still living have a weaker hold on their art and are far less creative, while the new writers do not seem to be gaining in stature.

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Sanskrit

S. S. JANAKI

Early Narration

Ancient Sanskrit literature has two types of story narration; one is *kathā*, in which plot is an invention of the author, the other is *ākhyāna*, based on a story that is well-known. Similarly, ancient stage plays are of two types: *Nāṭaka* and *Prakaraṇa*, the former adapting a well-known story for its plot, while the latter is fiction. But there was no novel in the sense in which we use the word nowadays, although in Marathi the common name for 'novel' even now is *Kādambarī*, the title of the Sanskrit prose narrative written by the celebrated Banabhatta (7th century).

The Sanskrit novel, as conceived and written now, has, of course, been shaped by western influence. But the influence of such early forms of literature as the *Kādambarī* etc. is definitely noticeable in the modern social novels.

The Later Forms. The numerous Sanskrit periodicals have provided scope and incentive for the writing of novels and novelettes. But the novel has not captured the imagination of Sanskrit authors as much as the short story. Most of the available novels are translations or adaptations.

Before considering the modern Sanskrit novel, it is worth noting that even in the present day there are writers capable of emulating Bana, Subandhu and Somadeva—the author of *Kathāsaritsāgara* (The Ocean of Tale-Rivers, 1889). Bak Kanbe's *Kathāratnākara* (Ocean of Stories, 1971) written in two volumes, has been modelled on *Kathāsaritsāgara* and *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* (1901).

Parvatiya Visvesvara Pandeya, a versatile and scholarly writer of the 18th century, has written a narrative called *Mandāramañjarī* about the wedding of Prince Chitrabhanu of Pushpapura and the Vidyadhara princess Mandara-

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manjari. Pandit Veda Vyasa Sukla of Varanasi has written in similar style *Sauprabham*, a narrative about the Brahmin Suprabha of Manmathapuri. In both *Sauprabham* and *Mandāramañjarī*, the authors have used a rather ornate, strained, heavy style. Romantic devices derived from folklore, marvellous and unimaginable adventures, free contacts between heaven and earth, and a treatment of three or four generations of characters are the special features of these two narratives.

Kapisthalam Krishnamacharya's (Kapisthalam Kṛṣṇamācārya, 1883–1933) style is elegant and smooth. His *Mandāravatī* (1929) is an outstanding romance, based on and adapted from, two stories in the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī* of Kshemendra. The story has a network of plots involving several characters, all of whom are skilfully delineated by the author. Apt figurative expressions, a direct and forceful style and an overall excellence of thematic presentation are the other noteworthy features of *Mandāravatī*. Krishnamacharya's second novel, *Rūpavatī* (printed in Telugu characters, 1926), is a simple narrative in verse and is about Rupavati, daughter of King Chandavikrama and Queen Indumati.

Translations and Adaptations

Rāyanavālakahā. The *Rāyanavālakahā* or *Ratnapāla-kathā*, a *tour de force* in Jaina Maharashtri Prakrit written by the famous monk Chandana Muni (Candana Muni, b. 1919), is important for more than one reason. It is a product of religious devotion and is meant to promulgate the Eternal Truth as the Jain faith conceives it. By presenting those teachings in narrative form, in order to make them more comprehensible to the world, the author hoped to stimulate their spread. The monk's story is about a childless couple, the trader Jinadatta and his wife Bhanumati, who live in the city of Purimatalapura. One day, a Yaksha appears before them and predicts that Jinadatta will have a son, but will lose all his possessions on account of the child. Everything happens according to the Yaksha's forecast. The son Ratnapala is born but is brought up by the miser Manmana to whom Jinadatta had to hand the child over as he was unable to repay a loan. Jinadatta and Bhanumati undergo untold sufferings in the forest. When Ratnapala comes of age, he realizes the situation, clears the debt due to his foster-father, and goes in search of his real parents. His adventures, on land and sea, are fascinating. Eventually he marries Ratnavati and is reunited with his parents. As in the ancient stories, motifs such as miracles, magic and sex-changes are used here too. Being a work meant for religious edification, Jaina principles and doctrines are enunciated on appropriate occasions. The style of the Marathi original as well as of the Sanskrit version is simple, straightforward and graceful.

Other Works. Judging from the several translations or adaptations among Sanskrit novels, it would seem that the celebrated Bengali novelist, Bankim Chandra, has greatly influenced Sanskrit writers. Appa Sharma Rasivadekar wrote *Lāvanyamayī* (1947), Hari Charan *Kapālakuṇḍalā* (1926), A. Rajagopala Chakravarti *Saivalinī* (1971), *Rādhārāṇī* and *Durgeśanandinī* (1922–23 and 1930–31), and Sri Saila Tatacharya (b. 1925) *Durgeśanandinī* and *Kṣatriyaramaṇī*. D. T. Tatacharya has rendered in Sanskrit the Tamil novel *Menakā* by Vaduvur Duraiswami Iyengar. *Kanakalatā* by P. K. Kalyana Shastri, son of Parittiyur Krishna Shastri, a gifted exponent of the Ramayana, is a romance based on Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*.

Not all these works are exact Sanskrit renderings. Necessary changes and adaptations of ideas, characters and style have been made. Most of these novels are in a simple and direct style, stressing intensity, brevity and suggestiveness. Some, like *Kanakalatā*, are, however, reminiscent of the flowery, exuberant style of Bana. In this story, Manasara, the prince of the land, falls in love with Kanakalata, wife of Kulottunga, a minister's son. The entry of Manasara into the inner chambers of Kanakalata's house, his wavering mind, his apostrophizing the lamp, etc. and the wiles of the lying, vivacious Kanakalata are described vividly, in a breath-taking manner.

Original Contributions

Jayaparājayam (Victory and Defeat) and *Svarṇamṛga* (Golden Deer) are Sanskrit versions published in 1966 of Rabindranath Tagore's stories. They are, of course, realistic and present movingly, emotional crises in the lives of the characters.

Dattā. *Dattā* is an original Sanskrit novel that first appeared in *Saṁskṛtasāhitya-Pariṣat-Patrikā* (1935). It is an absorbing story about the close attachment and friendship that Jagadisa, Vanamali and Rasa Viharin enjoyed. Their school-days and their later life as married men, two of them becoming members of the Brahmo Samaj, and the sensitive relationship between their children are all narrated in a realistic manner. Overenthusiastic descriptions and artificiality in style and presentation are completely eschewed.

Novelettes. Most Sanskrit novelettes are original and so form a noteworthy category. They are truly modern in form and content. K. L. V. Shastri's *Suvarṇapurīyā Nyāyavādinī* (The Advocate of Suvarnapura, 1960) tells the story of the adventurous Kamalakara, who leaves the house on the eve of his marriage to Rajahamsi. His bride-to-be pines for him, Buddhisagara manoeuvres to bring Kamalakara back and succeeds, and, eventually, Rajahamsi marries her lover. The title is explained by the fact that Buddhisagara manages

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things in such a manner that, as in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Rajasri appears as an advocate to argue Kamalakara's case when he is accused of theft. *Dārikāpaharaṇam* (The Kidnapping of the Girl, 1961) by the same author, is about the youthful but poor Hemalata whose marriage is arranged with a rich old man with children of his own. She leaves the house with her mother Harini, is helped in the forest by a youth named Hira who is doing social work, and finally marries him.

Rama Kishore Misra's *Sudāyo nama Kathānakam* (1960) is about the deep love between the poor girl Prema and the rich Kishore. A child is born to them illegitimately as Kishore's father prevents their marriage. Prema dies in the end, leaving the child in Kishore's hands.

Cārumatī and *Caturā Dāsī* are two novelettes by Subrahmanya Shastri included in the author's collection *Vinōdakathāmañjarī* (Collected Humorous Stories, 1965). Modelled as they are after the ancient stories, they employ miraculous motifs and magical elements.

This brief survey of the Sanskrit novel shows that although this genre has not been as well developed as other forms of Sanskrit literature, there are nevertheless a few works which may be reckoned as good. It is refreshing to find simple styles of language and story-presentation, realistic characters and incidents, and an intensity of feeling in most of the available novels.

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Sindhi

KRISHIN KHATWANI

Background

The novel is a comparatively recent development in literature. Even in western countries, where it evolved and matured, it gained popularity only in the 18th century. This literary form suits the complex society of today, when the boundaries of knowledge have so widened that simple rhetorical narration cannot explain all the intricacies of human relationships.

The time gap between the development of poetry and prose in Sindhi is very wide when compared to its sister languages. The main reason for this, probably, was the non-existence of a common script, essential for prose writing. Various scripts were used by the different Sindhi sects till the British, with the help of English and Sindhi scholars, devised and officially accepted in 1852 the present Arabic Sindhi script.

One of the first uses the new script was put to was for translated publications. Amongst the earliest novels translated into Sindhi was *Rasselas* (1868) by Dr Johnson. Two eminent scholars of the Sindhi language, Sadhu Navalrai (Sādhu Navalrāi, 1846–93) and Udharam Thanvardas (Udhārām Thānvardās, 1833–83), translated it so faithfully yet so gracefully that their work is considered a classic of Sindhi prose. There were also some translations of short novels from Urdu and Hindi, but the most popular books of the day were the hair-raising romances featuring courageous heroes and charming, beautiful heroines. Among these popular romances, the only book with some literary merit is *Gul Bakāvāli* by Nihalchand, which was translated from the Urdu in 1890 by Ahmed Khan Jalbani. There were a number of translations of similar stories, but the only translation of literary importance was that of Sir Walter Scott's historical novel, *The Talisman* (1891) by Hiranand Showkiram (Hīrānand Ṣouqirām). *Gul Khandān* (Smiling Flower, 1882), taken from *Fasāna-i-Ajāib* by Lutf Allah Muhammad Isaq Akhund (Luṭf Allāh Mohammad Iṣaq Ākhūnd, 1842–1902), survives not for its plot or characterization but for its luscious descriptions and sensitive poetic style.

The Social Novel

Mirza Qalich Beg (Miṛzā Qalīc Beg, 1853–1929) was the most prolific and versatile writer Sind has produced. He has about 350 titles to his credit—originals and translations. There is no branch of literature that he did not touch. His *Zīnat* (name of the heroine, 1890) is the first Sindhi novel of

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merit and is a remarkable achievement for its times. In his introduction to this novel, Mirza Beg writes: 'This is a newly planned imaginative story in which the vicissitudes of time and the present conditions are given in homely idiom. There is no trace of genii and spirits, fairies and giants, or of necromancy herein, unlike its predecessors. All the incidents in this book are probable and which can occur in the life of any human being' (tr. by L. H. Ajwani, *History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 184).

Zīnat is the story of a Muslim girl who, by her humility and virtues, becomes an ideal woman. In the first portion of the book, there are vivid descriptions of Sindhi Muslim middle-class life so true to life that many thought Mirza Beg had described his own family life. But in the latter part of the story, some unnatural incidents take place. The writer emphasizes the need for women's education and for upgrading their status in society. But he is a reformer, not a rebel; for example, he accepts the need of purdah for Muslim women. The novel is not without its defects. The characters are either wholly righteous or wholly wicked. Zīnat is too ideal a woman to be a flesh and blood creation. But in spite of these defects, this novel remains a landmark in Sindhi literature, for, it gives a true picture of the domestic and social life of its time in appropriate language.

In those days a writer considered it his honoured duty to help improve the lot of his fellow beings and expose social maladies. Prītamdās Hukūmatrāi, who called himself a 'humble seeker for reforms' wrote *Ajab Bhet* (Strange Comparison, 1892), a novel on the family life and social customs of two groups of Sindhi Hindus, the Āmils, or official class, and the Bhāibands, or mercantile community. The author said that one of his aims in writing the novel was to eradicate social evils. But though his portrayal of society was faithful and his language simple and chaste, the book did not attract much literary attention.

Lalchand Amardinomal (Lālcand Amardinomal, 1885–1954) is considered a master of Sindhi prose for the chaste, graceful idiomatically vibrant Sindhi he uses in his prose works. This is apparent in his *Coth Jo Cand* (The Fourth Day Moon, 1906), a novel based on the popular belief that he who looks at the moon on the fourth day of Baḍo month will be the victim of many misunderstandings. The real worth of this novel, about the relationship between two boys, lies in its exquisite language and serene descriptions of nature. Lalchand's other novel, *Kiṣinīa Jo Kaṣṭ* (Kishini's Sufferings, 1917), written on that favourite subject, a woman's plight in society, is not as impressive a work as the former.

Bherūmal Mehercand (1875–1950) wrote two social novels, *Ānand Sundrīka* (1910) and *Mohinībāī* (1917), the first a tragedy, the second with a happy ending. Both, true to the needs and traditions of the times, expose social evils and urge, in sermons, their eradication. The recurrent theme of Hindu-Muslim unity and the need to bring closer the cultures of city and village are also treated in them. Bherumal Meherchand is also credited with writing the first Sindhi crime novel, *Varial ain Naimat* (1915), which is based on Muslim life in Sind.

H. M. Gurbakshani's (Gurbakṣānī, 1883–1947) historical novel *Nūr Jahān* (1915), an adaptation, is nevertheless considered a classic in Sindhi on account of its purple passages and its ornate style. Another writer, Abdur Razāk Memon tried to follow in the footsteps of Gurbakshani by writing *Jahān Ārā* (1931). It is a tragic novel and has been hailed as one of the early original novels. 'It is a successful novel from the point of view of both language as well as plot' (M. J. Joyo, Introduction to *Jahān Ārā*, 2nd ed., 1956). In the words of L. H. Ajwani, 'It will bring to the readers the aroma of a bygone period and environment' (*History of Sindhi Literature*, p. 202).

From Other Languages. The wave of patriotism that followed the announcement of the partition of Bengal reached Sind also. And writers and readers began to turn their eyes from the west to the east. Till then, translations were mostly from English, Persian and Urdu. Now Kauromal Chandanmal (1844–1914), a sober and respected writer, translated some of the novels of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. These translations ignited the spirit of nationalism and opened new frontiers in novel writing to Sindhi writers. No longer was it necessary to adapt western classics to Indian conditions, changing the names of characters and places, and tackling problems out of context. Sind, like other parts of the country, discovered that India had its own cultural lineage. And so, after Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the works of Tagore and many other Bengali writers were translated. So were novels from Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati.

The Sunder Sahitya Society, Karachi, started publishing books in 1924 and continued uninterruptedly till Partition. In the first phase, they published historical novels from Hindi and Urdu. They, then, gave emphasis to social novels. Ratan Sahitya Mandal, Karachi, started publishing in 1934. They published the bulk of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's works, some novels of Tagore and most of the novels of Sarat Chandra Chatterjee. Kahani Sahitya Mandal, which started in 1939, maintained high literary and artistic standards and published the best from all languages, including some translations from southern languages and European languages. It has continued publishing after Partition also, giving preference to original novels. Its editor, Jagat Advani, is a very sensitive translator and strives for near perfection. Bharat Jeevan Sahitya Mandal, started in 1940, continues till this day, catering mainly to popular taste, with original novels as well as translations. Almost all major novels published in this period, in North Indian languages were translated into Sindhi and they inevitably had an impact on the new writing in Sindhi.

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In Search of an Identity. In the earlier days of the Sindhi novel, more attention was paid to description and analysis of social customs and habits of groups than to the individual mind and aesthetic aspects. The freedom struggle and the cultural renaissance brought a new self-confidence among writers. The influence of Gandhiji infused the young with idealism and a social vision in which woman worked shoulder to shoulder with man. Freud's psychological researches gave these writers a deeper understanding of the working of the human mind.

The first novel of this new liberated atmosphere was *Āśirvād* (Blessings, 1933) by Shewak Bhojraj (Śevak Bhojrāj, b. 1906). 'Dada Shewak', as he came to be called by children after he started 'Balkan—ji Bari', an all-India children's organization, was then a schoolteacher at Larkana. He had come under the influence of Gandhiji and dreamt of an idealistic life.

Āśirvād is the first Sindhi novel to be written in plain simple language. It describes no extraordinary incident and narrates the tale of ordinary people, paying attention to their day-to-day lives and dreams. The plot has a natural flow, but the attractive, hazy country-side atmosphere that has been created is more idealistic than real. Shewak Bhojraj wrote another novel, *Dādā Śyām* (1934), in the same vein. He depicted a schoolteacher's relationship with her girl students in this second novel, but could not breathe into it the freshness and originality of his earlier novel.

When *Ṣāir* (Poet, 1941), by Assanand Mamtora (Assānand Māmtorā, b. 1903), was first published, it became a literary event in Sind. Mamtora had already created controversy by writing psychological stories, in which sex was accepted as an integral and healthy part of life. In *Ṣāir* Mamtora takes the reader to a different area of experience. The story is woven round the belief that there is some hidden relationship among souls, of which even those concerned are not aware. But when such souls meet by chance, they intuitively realize their deep relationship and find fulfilment in their spiritual union. A Hindu youth, a poet and seeker of beauty, goes to Kashmir in search of solace and meets a Kashmiri Muslim girl. Their souls realize that they have a timeless relationship. It would appear as if the Sufi culture of Sind was the influencing factor in selecting a Hindu hero and a Muslim heroine. However, the major attraction of the novel is not in its plot or episodes, but in the soul-stirring descriptions of lush nature, which to the thirsty minds of the desert were like an oasis, and in the unfolding of the relationship between the hero and heroine, which culminates in a nuptial bond. Critics acclaimed the language of Mamtora, which was a happy mingling of words derived from Persian and Sanskrit.

In *Ithād* (Unity, 1941) by Gulī Kripālānī (née Sadāraṅgāṇī, b. 1906), a Hindu girl marries a Muslim boy. Guli had previously translated Tagore's *Gora*, and perhaps that had inspired her to write this novel. Orthodox Hindus criticized the views expressed in it, but literary circles welcomed it as a successful novel that had a well-knit plot and refined expression.

Despite such novels of inter-religious love and marriage, ominous clouds of communal disharmony were already floating in the Indian sky. But few Sindhi Hindus ever thought that they would have to leave Sind. In Sind, Muslim writers had written on Hindu life and Hindu writers on Muslim life. In 1922–23, Hakim Abdul Khaliq Morai had written a trilogy on Hindu life in the days of the Hindu kings Chuch and Daharsen. Naraindas Bhambhani (Nārāindās Bhambhāṇi, b. 1912), who had earlier written two novels, *Mālhiṇ* (Women Gardener, 1942) and *Vidhvā* (Widow, 1943), wrote *Garīban Jo Varso* (Heritage of the Poor) in 1946, the story of a poor Muslim clerk working in the country-side. In *Vidhvā*, Naraindas portrays the fate of a Hindu widow who, after much struggle and opposition from society, remarries and finds life again.

Ram Panjwani (Rām Panjvāṇī, b. 1911) also wrote a novel on rural Muslim life, *Latifā* (1945). Panjwani, who has continued writing novels after Partition too, had written some novels in Sindhi earlier. His *Qaidī* (Prisoner, 1943) is the story of a musician and his loves; *Ṣarmīlā* (1944) gives a glimpse of Gujarati life in Bombay; *Asan-jo-Ghar* (Our Home, 1946) was inspired by the stage drama, *Dīvār*, of Prithviraj Kapoor; and in *Cāndīa jo Camko* (Glitter of Silver, 1947), he shows how money has changed the age-old values of society.

Another novel on rural life was *Dukhan Puṭhiān Sukh* (1942) by Tahilram Asudomal. Chandulal Jaisinghani's (b. 1920) first novel, *Zindah Dil* (Lively One, 1942) was a love story in an urban atmosphere. *Bīnā* (1943), by the poet Nirmal Jiwtani (Niṛmal Jīvtāṇī), who died very young, was a novel written with poetic exuberance. Nirmaldas Phatahchand (Nirmaldās Phatahcand, 1866–1940), an established poet, wrote a historical novel, *Dalūrāi Jī Nagirī* (The City of Dalurai) which was published in 1944. This novel was written after much research and tells the story of King Dalurai of the 11th century, who was notorious for his voluptuousness and cruelty. The novel with its involved and sophisticated language is written in such complicated style that it cannot reach the common reader.

New Environments

After 1947, Sindhi Hindus did not migrate to India according to any definite plan. The intellectuals and the creative artists were the last to leave. Several of the older generation of writers, who had worked and dreamed in collaboration with their Muslim counterparts, were so stunned by the Partition and its aftermath that they did not write again.

The migrant Sindhis did not settle in one area or in one state in India. Though this helped them in economic rehabilitation, cultural rehabilitation became a long and diffi-

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cult struggle. With most of the established writers silent, new young writers came forward to express the anguish of the community. Several of them were influenced by the Progressive Writers' Movement, which came to Sind from Urdu and Hindi a few years before Partition. A few of them had earlier won acclaim in Sind as poets and short-story writers, but the novel had remained untouched by them.

In the first Sindhi novels written in India, the story invariably starts in Sind and then moves on with the characters to different parts of India. In these stories, the characters are found living two different life-styles. In Sind, the Hindus had generally lived as joint families and, being economically well off, had lived a carefree happy life. After migration, the joint families broke up and, economically, individuals had to start life anew. Economic pressures compelled every adult member of the lower middle-class families including women, to earn their livelihood. These changes were reflected in the new novels, several of which described the life in camps where decent living and human dignity were memories of the past and humiliation was the fate that haunted souls.

Post-Partition Novels

Gobind Mālhī (b. 1921) was the first major Sindhi novelist after Partition. He has written 23 novels, sometimes bringing out two or three a year. This voluminous output and the absence of proper planning in his later novels has affected their quality in general. But his early work is noteworthy. His first novel, *Ānsū* (Tears, 1952), is the poignant tale of a family living in a refugee camp. In *Zindagīa Jerāh Te* (On the Path of Life, 1952), Malhi describes the breaking up of a joint family and the emergence of its women as breadwinners. *Jīvan Sāthī* (Life Partner, 1952), unfolds the changing pattern of love and marriage that came into Sindhi middle-class life after migration. *Pakhīara Vallar Khān Vicuṛia* (Birds Separated from their Flock, 1953) traces the changing mental and emotional attitudes of the Hindus and Muslims that led to the great calamity. In *Ṣarambūṭī* (The Shy Bush, 1955), he describes the crumbling Zamindari System and the rise of the trading community. In the preface to the second edition of his *Desī Seṇa Kajan* (Must One Marry in One's Own Clan?, 1958) Malhi wrote: 'I believe in Art for life and in all my books I have tried to mirror life. In some I have tried to focus light on some social and national problems...of course artistically.'

L. H. Ajwani, author of *History of Sindhi Literature*, considers *Desī Seṇa Kajan* one of the outstanding novels in the Sindhi language. The story starts with the arrival of Jivan, a young Sindhi cloth merchant, to sell his cloth in the small bazaar of a fishing village, Koliwada, in suburban Bombay. How the intimacy, almost accidental, develops between the young man and Shalu, a dark beauty from the village, is dramatically narrated. The novel's outstanding qualities are its beautiful description of the dreamlike atmosphere of the fishing village, and the creation of the child-like, apparently fickle but very strong-willed Shalu.

In Malhi's *Dehī Parḍehi Thiyā* (Fellow Countrymen Become Foreigners, 1961) the plot develops through a series of letters. His other novels include *Iṣq Nāhe Rānd* (Love is No Play, 1955) and *Lok Āhe Bok* (The People Do Criticize, 1957). The latter is the tragic story of a young widow who, though trying to curb her youthful emotions and desires, is carried away by the current of impulse. Society frowns on her waywardness, but she remarries and settles down in the end.

Malhi was also inspired by Lalchand Amardinomal's *Hura Makhī-a-jā* (Hurs of Makhi Lake) and wrote a full-fledged novel about the war of freedom waged by the Hurs (Free Men—the followers of Pir Pagaro, a religious head of the Muslims). The work, *Jin Suri Bharin Seja* (Those who Considered Gallows a Bedecked Bed, 1959) wove a story with the adventures and exploits of the freedom-fighters. In spite of his Marxist ideology, Malhi has remained traditional in some of his novels, such as *Pyār ji Pyās* (Life's Hunger, 1972) which won him the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1974.

Sundri Uttamchandani (Sundrī Uttamcandāṇī, b. 1924) has written only two novels, but with them has created a place for herself in the annals of Sindhi literature. She wrote *Kṛindar Dīvāriun* (Crumbling Walls, 1953) and *Pṛit Purāṇī Rīt Nirāli* (Old Love, New Approach, 1961) when the Progressive Literature Movement was at its peak in Sindhi literature. But Sundri is not a political writer; she is too poetic and sensitive to limit herself to popular ideas. Rekha of *Kṛindar Dīvāriun* is one of the most memorable characters in Sindhi literature. She is a typical middle-class girl, who silently craves for the good things of life. The story starts on the eve of Partition, when parents wanted to be relieved of their burden of grown-up daughters before leaving for less-known lands. As her father cannot give a good dowry, Rekha is married to a poor man. Her agony increases when she finds that her husband does not give any importance to the pretensions that give colour to an otherwise drab middle-class life. After Partition, the couple migrate to a suburb of Bombay, where her loneliness increases as her husband is too busy with the trade union affairs of the factory in which he works. It is by a slow and painful process that she is able to reconcile the different values in life, and eventually, put aside false pride and accept a job as a worker in a hosiery factory.

In the first part of *Pṛit Purāṇī Rīt Nirāli*, Sundri provides vivid descriptions of the life young girls led in pre-Partition Hyderabad (Sind). She, then, goes on to tell a love story that is doomed by the cowardice of a boy unable to defy his father. In the development of the story, two contrasting female characters are depicted: Sarla, bold and indepen-

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dent, who, in spite of frustration in love, reshapes her life, and Jamna, meek and submissive, who allows her husband to destroy their happiness as well as that of his family.

Two other women writers who have written novels on the lives of women and their inner turmoils are Gulī Kripālānī (*Sādhna Jo Sapno*—Sadhna's Dream, 1960) and Tara Mirchandani (*Uṣā*—Dawn, 1958 and *Kūmāial Kalyūn*—Withered Buds, 1949). But after their first works they have remained silent.

Other noteworthy novels have been Moti Prakash's *Andhero Ujālo* (Darkness and Light), a novel on refugee camp life and K. S. Balani's *Rik Rāhī Anek Rāhūn* (One Walker Many Paths) and *Rāt Vihāṇi Pṛiha Phuṭī* (Night Ends, Dawn Begins). Balani, a painter who died young, provided several beautiful word sketches in his novels. Shivo Ramnani, Lachman Sathi and Kishin Chand Nagarani wrote social novels on the changing Sindhi society.

Some Popular Novelists

Ram Panjwani, as mentioned earlier, had written some novels in pre-Partition days. After Partition, he has been one of the few established writers to continue writing. His three post-Partition novels—*Zindagī Yā Maut* (Life or Death, 1952), *Āhe Na Āhe* (Does He Exist or Not, 1955) and *Dhiar Na Jamān* (Can't a Girl be Born?, 1957)—are very popular. As in his earlier novels, Panjwani considers a particular problem in each of the novels, constructing his story and moulding his characters around it to establish a preconceived conclusion. *Dhiar Na Jamān* is a satire on a community in which the dowry is more important than the girl. A father announces that instead of giving a dowry to his daughter, he will take Rs 20,000 from the bridegroom! How he ingeniously succeeds is the tale of this novel. In *Zindagī Yā Maut* and *Āhe Na Āhe*, Panjwani turns to God as the healer of all misery in the world. He discusses the existence of God in the former, which seems to be the forerunner of the latter novel. Niranjan Dada, a Bengali, whose belief in God is not shaken even by the most adverse happenings, radiates His message to those around him in this novel. Through his characters and incidents, Panjwani tries to prove that faith in the Almighty solves all human problems, even mundane ones like social success. In spite of such old-fashioned themes, Panjwani sustains reader-interest as he is a good story-teller.

Chandulāl Jaisinghānī, before he became the most popular detective story writer, wrote some social novels. These novels, the most popular of which are *Pahāri Coṭiyān* (Mountain Peaks) and *Bādal Bhūmi* (Cloud's Land, 1960), are longer than any others published in Sindhi and contain several descriptions of episodes and events from the previous decades to sustain the interest of the common reader. For his detective novels, Jaisinghani, an advocate by profession, has created a character called Bagu Barrister on the lines of Erle Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason, and these stories reveal a perceptive picture of the crime world and the working of the police and the courts.

Kanya Hansrājānī's only novel, *Mamta*, is in two parts, and provides a good picture of middle-class Sindhis living in towns far from the fast life of Bombay. Hari Himthani has written several novels on the transitory happy and sorrowful moods of the lower middle class who live apart from the main current of world events.

Romantic Interlude. Kala Prakash (Kalā Pṛakāś) and Krishin Khatwani (Kṛṣin Khaṭvāṇī, b. 1927) are often linked with the Progressive Writer's Movement, but reveal themselves in their novels as more romantic than progressive. Kala Prakash, an emotional writer, is a throwback to the Bronte sisters of English literature. Her recurring theme is the fate of the sensitive woman who wants to love and be loved but whose emotional attachment to the people around her creates misunderstandings, which, in the small coterie of middle-class life, cause misery for all concerned. Prakash, whose understanding of life seems to be that all good and sensitive souls are born to suffer, has written three novels: *Hik Dil Hazār Armān* (One Heart, Thousand Longings, 1957), *Ṣīṣe Jī Dil* (The Heart of Glass, 1960) and *Sapno Hiku Sukhan Jo* (A Dream of Happiness, 1971). Her setting in each novel is the middle-class family, closed within itself and oblivious to the world around. The story of *Ṣīṣe Jī Dil* starts in Sind, where a boy and a girl, who love each other, marry after some struggle. After Partition, they move to a suburb of Bombay where they live as a joint family—two brothers and their wives. It is the simplicity of the heroine Sarla who innocently wants to distribute love to all around her that creates problems. Misunderstandings increase as Sarla claims her right on every drop of love that her husband distributes in the family. She dies a lonely death, starved of the love which she had prized so much in life. Kala has quoted in one of her novels a couplet by the poet Narayan Shyam which amply expresses her view of life:

> Life is not laughter, but mockery, O Shyam,
> Previously I'd only thought it
> Now I know it by experience. (tr.)

Krishin Khatwani was educated in Shantiniketan and the influence of Tagore and Bengali literature is discernible in his writings. Of his first novel *Amar Pyār* (Eternal Love, 1961), Hiro Shewakani, the well-known critic wrote: '*Amar Pyār* as a novel is a success. Love of man and woman is portrayed in beautiful language and in sublime tones. It is a fact that (the) novel (in general) cannot escape from the realities of life, but an artistic novel has its own independent existence and its own world, and these aesthetic feelings this novel recreates' (*Development of Sindhi Novel*

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after Partition, *Tanqeed*, p. 47). Khatwani's second novel, *Muhinjī Mithrī Sind* (My Beloved Sind, 1964), is about the emotional attachment of a young poet to the land of his birth and its people. The story starts with his birth and abruptly ends in his early youth when he has to leave everything with which he had become one in his dreams and imagination.

Popaṭī Hīrānandāṇi (b. 1924) is a rebel and a vigorous fighter for the cause of women. In her novels, woman aspires for both physical and spiritual fulfilment, but man's fickleness and desire for dominance leave her frustrated. Popati has written three novels. *Mañjū* (1950) is a tale of an unequal marriage. In *Hasratan Jī Turbat* (The Grave of Desires, 1961), she unfolds a woman's aspirations and their untimely death. Her *Jīa Mein Jhorī Tan Mein Tāt* (Longing Body, Remembering Heart, 1968) is the story of two lovers who are caught up in a vortex of misunderstanding through the selfish interference of a third person. But, in the end love triumphs. In the process, two women characters are revealed in sharp contrast, one is a very contemporary person living according to her impulses, the other is sober, and trusts only the values tested by time.

Param Abichandani (Param Abīcandāṇi, b. 1926) has written two novels, *Jharṇā* (Water Falls, 1962) and *Hika Jar ba Jibhūn* (One Fire, Two Flames, 1964). Both are stories of love unfulfilled in previous births remaining unfulfilled in this birth also. In *Hika Jar ba Jibhūn*, the hero, an artist living in Rome, sees a vision of a beautiful girl who, one night, visits his studio and asks him to draw her portrait. When he returns to India, he sees in his sister's friend the girl of his vision. The girl, though married is attracted to him, but the boy, haunted by social obligations, prefers to escape and thus ruins several lives.

The young writers of this period were influenced by such Hindi writers as Jainendra Kumar, Sachidananda Vatsyayan ('Ajneya'), Nirmal Verma, Mohan Rakesh and others in the initial stages; and by Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Sartre and other western novelists, as they developed. Among them, one of the most noteworthy is Mohan Kalpanā, a controversial figure in Sindhi literature. He has written about 20 novels. His *Añjān Rāt Bāgī Āhe* (The Night Still Lingers, 1954), is a report of the Goa liberation struggle, in which he had participated. It is a tale narrated lucidly and sincerely and shows the influence of progressive writers popular at the time. But Kalpana, later, led the revolt against writers having a political background.

Kalpana is a trend-setter, delving deep into the heart of man, instead of merely describing his surroundings. His many novels are on the quest of lost souls for light in the dark abysses of the mind. Many of his novels are about refugees, though in them he lays more stress on the injuries sustained by their souls than on the agonies suffered through physical wants. Among his more representative novels is *Run ain Pāchha* (Desert and the Shade, 1962), written in an autobiographical style. This is the story of a man different from the people around him. Kumar lives more in his own mental world than in the tangible world whose social customs and pretensions he hates. To satisfy the hunger of his body and soul, he falls in love with every girl he meets, but he dies a lonely death in his room one night, where his only companions are a few books and a Mona Lisa in print. Kalpana has also written a novel based on child psychology. *Surg Jī Gholhā* (In Search of Paradise) is one of the very few novels written on this subject.

Guno Samtaney (Guno Sāmtāṇī), another modern writer, has been influenced by Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, the Indian Scriptures and the latest western thinking in literature and arts. He has written only one novel, *Vāpas* (The Return, 1956), which, like his short stories, depicts Indian womanhood preserving it traditional modesty while accepting the independent thinking and personal freedom of modern society.

Shyam Jaisinghani's (Ṣyām Jaisinghāṇī, b. 1937) *Kacī Dhāgā* (Weak Threads, 1966) is a novel immersed in a romantic atmosphere and reveals an intellectual understanding of beauty in the manner of Keats and Shelley. It is the story of a modern man and woman, joined by wedlock, but living apart. Their love is their bond and also the cause of their separation.

New Horizons. Lal Pushp (Lāl Puṣp, b. 1935) has traversed many paths after his first novel *Ātam Maryāda* (Self-respect, 1961), which was written in collaboration with his wife, Kavita. His novels are short, dealing with one problem or one major experience only. They have neither traditional plots nor a developing story, but depict a continuous process of thinking and feeling, intensified by an atmosphere of futility. His *Hika Sarad Dīvār* (One Old Wall, 1969) is the product of a conscious endeavour to seek new dimensions and express new experiences. In it, Lal shows the futility of human relations. Having no past, knowing they have no future, two human beings try to find fulfilment in the present, but fulfilment eludes them and they accept their destiny.

The bold experiments of Lal Pushp, Shyam Jaisinghani, Anand Khemani and Vishnu Bhatia in their writing augur well for the future of the Sindhi novel.

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Tamil

S. KANDASWAMI 'TURAIVAN'

The Birth of the First Novel

The first Tamil novel was not an accident. It was the result of a conscious attempt by an English-educated Tamil Christian, a judicial officer of the British Indian Government to make good what he believed was a deficiency in Tamil literature. Verse was looked upon as the sole vehicle for serious literature for centuries in the Tamil country. *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest Tamil grammatical treatise, mentions several kinds of prose. But prose was seldom used for literary communication. In the Middle Ages, commentary on literary, philosophical and grammatical treatises was composed in a kind of terse documentary prose. But literary prose had to wait for the advent of the printing machine to assert itself as a form of literary expression. Even then, the early attempts at prose-writing were close approximations to rhythmic verse and it took long years for prose to shake off the vestiges of verse and acquire the multichannelled flow of ordinary speech.

Samuel Vedanayakam Pillai (1826–89), father of the modern Tamil novel was well over fifty and had retired from Government service when he wrote his novel *Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram* (The Life and Adventures of Pratapa Mudaliyar) in 1879. Earlier, he had published some other books, all in verse.

'My object in writing this work of fiction,' Vedanayakam Pillai said in his English preface to the first edition, 'is to supply the want of prose works in Tamil and also to give a practical illustration of the maxims on morality contained in my former works....' The scene is laid in South India. The hero is a well-educated native gentleman of brilliant parts, wit and humour. He gives an account of his birth, parentage, education, marriage and other important events of his life and the narrative is intermixed with various scenes of humour and pleasantry and observations of a moral tendency. 'In writing this story, I have not followed the example of those novelists who depict human nature as it is, not as it ought to be, and who thus exhibit bad specimens of humanity which are often mistaken by the young and inexperienced for objects of imitation. I have represented the principal personages as perfectly virtuous in accordance with the opinion of the great English moralist Dr Johnson....'

Vedanayakam Pillai was an intellectual of the highest calibre. He practised what he professed. He was a great friend of the scholars and holy men of his time. He was well-versed in music and composed his *Samarasa Kīrtanaigaḷ* (1858), a bunch of non-denominational music-compositions. The attributes to God woven into these compositions are mostly from the Hindu philosophical works in Sanskrit and hence acceptable to the vast majority of the people. These compositions are still sung in concerts of classical Karnatak music. Till recently, Vedanayakam Pillai was perhaps betterknown as a composer than as the author of the first Tamil novel.

'*Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram* is a long, rambling story told in the first person of the main character. Though realistic in patches, most of the incidents are improbable and far from the natural. Gnanambal, the heroine, while disguised in male attire is chosen king by an elephant's whim and she rules the state with great skill and dignity. The novel has many subsidiary themes, resulting in many loose ends. The narrator digresses every now and then to recount traditional tales, anecdotes, etc. All this tends to distract the attention of the reader from the main flow of the story. The resultant work is an ungainly, though interesting novel, with a preoccupation to please and entertain, to educate and inform, all at the same time. The first Tamil novel, in fact, might seem to fail by trying to do everything' (R. E. Asher, *Novel in India: Its Birth and Development*).

Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram: More than a Novel

All said and done, Vedanayakam Pillai's contribution was unique. His novel was a bold departure from the prose narratives of earlier writers, in theme and style, in the construction of plot and mode of presentation. His Tamil was simple but not colloquial. He had an unfailing eye for the incongruities in human behaviour. His descriptions of domestic quarrels in the high-society Hindu life of the time were based on keen observation. As a pioneering effort, *Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram* is truly remarkable and offers many insights. It marks the water-shed between the age of poetry and that of prose. For, in the next hundred years, Tamil literature undergoes a virtual regeneration, a great renewal, as it were, of its prowess to move with the time unyielding to the ravages of changing circumstances. Father Beschi's *Paramārtha Guru Kathai* (The Story of Paramartha Guru, a teacher and his naive pupils, 1822), Tandavaraya Mudaliyar's *Pañcatantra Kathai* (Tales fromt the Sanskrit work, *Pañcatantra*, 1826), *Aesop Kaṭṭukathaikaḷ* (Fables of Aesop, 1853), *Madanakāmarājan Kathai* (The Story of King Madanakama, one of the tales from the King Vikramaditya legends, 1855), *Tamiḻaṇiyumperumāḷ Kathai* (the story of

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noble lady of great scholarship in Tamil, 1869)—all such prose works intended for the common people culminated in the writing of the first ever Tamil novel by Samuel Vedanayakam Pillai. His novel was a great forerunner of the massive prose literature that developed in Tamil.

The Novel Takes Root

When a great pioneer achieves a spectacular success, a spate of attempts by others follows to take the movement forward. It is therefore not surprising that the quarter century after the publication of *Pratāpa Mudaliyār Caritram* witnessed a sturdy and attractive efflorescence of the novel. A study of the first Tamil novel must have suggested to those that came after, the immense possibilities of the art-form in the context of contemporary Tamil society.

Two names stand out among the novelists of the last quarter of the 19th century: B. R. Rajam Iyer and Madhavayya. The former's *Kamalāmbaḷ Caritram* (The Story of Kamalambal) appeared as a serial story in the monthly journal *Vivēka Cintāmaṇi* in 1893. B. R. Rajam Iyer (1872–98) was the editor of *Prabuddha Bhārata*, a monthly journal in English devoted to religion and philosophy. He published several articles on a wide variety of subjects in other periodicals also.

Kamalāmbaḷ Caritram is a well-constructed novel with a large number of characters. It depicts the life-style of South Indian Brahmins. The author does not fight shy of using the colloquial dialect. The incidents have plausibility, although they do appear a little extraordinary. The several references to Kamban's Ramayanam are an index to the author's scholarship and profound love for the epic. The portrayal of Adusapatti Ammaiyappa Pillai, the Tamil teacher, is considered fascinating.

'In Madurai is a Government College generally known as the District School. In the middle of some benches in a corner of the school verandah were placed a chair and a table. On the table were some ink-stands. As soon as the "ding-dong" of ten o'clock was heard, about twenty boys assembled there. Within five minutes of their arrival, there came a man, tall and dark, with pock-marked face. He was the school's Tamil Pandit, his name Ammaiyappa Pillai. He would be about fifty years old. He came from Adusapatti, a large town of five or six houses and a tamarind tree. He was a real character. If he began impromptu singing, he would reel off a rapid succession of verses, like monkeys shaking figs from a fig tree. If anyone who knew Tamil fell into his hands, he would straightaway, before they could breathe, pierce their ears with songs to the number of three or four hundred like arrows from Rama's bow' (tr. R. E. Asher).

Madhavayya (Mādhavayya, 1872–1925) who is the other great novelist of the period was a Government officer with an intellectual bent of mind. During leisure hours, he started writing a novel called *Padmāvatī Caritram* (The Story of Padmavati). It traced the vicissitudes of life in a Brahmin family. The impact of modern education on the traditional values, the lingering notions of family prestige, the plight of widows, all these are depicted with sympathy and frankness. The author's reformist zeal is more explicit in the later novels. *Padmāvatī Caritram* was so popular with the readers that Madhavayya wrote a sequel, tracing further the story of the family and its fortunes.

Madhavayya's language has a smooth flow without any lingering vestiges of rhetorical verse. The change-over from verse to prose meant avoidance of flamboyant expressions and conceits. The idiosyncrasies of the young and old are described with deep insight. The subtle nuances of personality, particularly of a woman's, are spelled out with skill and understanding.

Madhavayya wrote both in English and Tamil. He edited a monthly journal *Pañcāmṛtam* in which he started serializing the sequel to his *Padmāvatī Caritram*.

An account of the pioneer-novelists in Tamil will not be complete without a mention of Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri (Naṭēśa Śāstri, 1859–1906). He was a contemporary of both Rajam Iyer and Madhavayya. Well-versed in Sanskrit, English and several other languages, he produced about eight novels and published a number of books of popular stories.

Kōmaḷam Kumariyānadu, a novel by Sastri, is a typical example of the out-of-the-ordinary themes he chose to write on. 'It concerns two sisters, former dancing-girls, Komalam (aged sixty) and Dhanam (aged fifty-five), who, feeling envious of their younger fellows, spent large sums on a drug to make them young again. Komalam took an overdose and Dhanam returned home to find only a very young baby there. Complications ensued, including the suspicion that Dhanam murdered her sister. The situation got more and more confused and would never have been straightened out but for the fact that the effects of the drug eventually wore off' (R. E. Asher).

Such was the inventiveness of the irrepressible Sastri who claimed to have written the first novel in Tamil. His was the first detective novel in Tamil (*Tanavān*, 1894).

Another novelist of considerable merit was T. M. Ponnuswami Pillai (1855–1915), also a Government officer who wrote in his leisure hours. Author of six novels, *Kamalākṣi*, his first work, was published in 1903. His plots were complex. He had a flair for dialogues and a keen sense of human behaviour. He was fully aware of the potentialities of the novel as a tool for educating the people. Reading a novel added a new dimension to the mental make-up of the people; it was 'an unfailing delight to millions, happily not too critical'.

The Tamil literary scene at the turn of the century was stimulating. Periodicals sought to improve their circulation by serializing novels. Only a few of the novels had any claim

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to literary merit. The others were merely yarns with sentimental themes and half-digested ideas preaching social reforms. It is surprising that no serious attempt was made during this period to translate a few of the outstanding novels of European languages to serve as models.

Expanding Readership and Fall in Literary Standards

Following the early novelists such as Rajam Iyer, Madhavayya, Natesa Sastri and Ponnuswami Pillai, a host of writers, men and women entered the creative scene. Not all of them were endowed with an understanding of the new art-form they were toying with. At best, the men and women of the novels were types or abstractions lacking in human authenticity. Lacking artistic commitment of any kind these writers merely enjoyed the popularity that their printed books brought them.

The commercial success of the 'novels' attracted the attention of the publishers of the time. The periodicals such as *Cakravartini*, *Vivēka Bōdhini*, *Vidyāvihārini*, *Kalaimakaḷ*, etc. serialized novels by popular authors. The rising demand for novels and the monthly increase in magazine-circulation made the publihers hire writers to keep the printing press going without intermission. Eventually, Arni Kuppuswami Mudaliar, Vaduvur Duraiswami Iyengar, J. R. Rangaraju, Vai. Mu. Kodainayaki and others took over as the 'matinee idols' of popular literature. Many of the novels were written in imitation of English novels, full of mystery and suspense. The adaptation was not always accomplished with great skill. J. R. Rangaraju became the very by-word for detective fiction. His works on the exploits of Detective Govindan ran into numerous editions. Some formed the basis of popular stage plays and films. Written in a racy style, these novels were an instant success and won for their authors immediate recognition, not necessarily commensurate with their literary gifts. All the ingredients of popular appeal were there in ample measure in all of them. However, it must be said that a few of them had considerable literary merit and almost all of them helped build up a wide readership in the Tamil country.

The National Movement: New Forces of Creative Activity

From 1908 onwards, the great poet Subramania Bharati, in voluntary exile in Pondicherry, was assiduously engaged in revolutionizing Tamil poetry. It was during this period that the great novels of Bankim Chandra and Sarat Chandra were made available in excellent Tamil translations by T. N. Kumaraswami and A. K. Jayaraman. During this period, again, the short story made its appearance as yet another powerful literary form imported from western literature. The advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene was another significant event of the period. Subramania Bharati in his great *Pañcakam* (five stanzas) hailed the Mahatma as the Father of the nation. It was during this period that some intellectuals acquainted with the writings of western atheists sowed the seeds of the 'Dravidian' movement. The evils of drink, prostitution, horse-racing, etc. came under heavy fire. The Devadasi system was exposed in many novels and short stories, as the undoing of many rich families.

Subramania Bharati: Architect of Modernism

The renaissance of Tamil literature was led by Subramania Bharati (Subramaṇya Bhārati, 1882–1921) with his soul-stirring national songs and other poems of robust vision. It must be remembered that his prose pieces were equally powerful. Dealing as they did, with a wide panorama of ideas, they were scintillating specimens of literary composition. Bharati wrote an exquisite fantasy called *Gñāna Ratham* (The Chariot of Wisdom) in which he describes with astounding poetic imagination his brief sojourns in Upashanti Loka, Gandharva Loka, Dharma Loka and Satya Loka. Bharati's *Candrikaiyin Kathai* is undoubtedly a memorable work of art. If completed, the novel could have served as a great model. *Candrikaiyin Kathai* is refreshingly modern in its style and structure. Decades after the pioneer-novelists, one sees in this novel a genuine literary spirit. The story unfolds in the picturesque vividness of Bharati's prose. The characters are drawn with the sure strokes of a master. The novel traces the life of a young widow, Visalakshi who approaches social reformers of the day to arrange for her remarriage. A young sanyasi marries her but dies within a short time.

The Advent of Modern Journalism: Kalki

The late twenties of this century witnessed a marvellous feat in Tamil journalism. S. S. Vasan (1903–69), a pioneer in many fields, bought over the *Ānanda Vikaṭan* from its founder and began an all-out attempt to reach the middle class. He had an uncanny ability to spot creative talent. The young Ra. Krishnamurthi with some journalistic experience was recommended to him. *Ānanda Vikaṭan* provided the platform for Ra. Krishnamurthi 'Kalki's' (pseud. of Kṛṣṇamūrti, 1899–1954) prolific writing that made him so popular with the reading public. Kalki soon became the master story-teller and commentator on current affairs, political and social. Thousands of *Vikaṭan* readers were hypnotized by Kalki's editorials, write-ups and short stories. His smooth, musical prose illumined complex ideas. His light-hearted sallies of humour added charm to the most mundane things. Kalki could conjure up visions of town and country life with a few well-turned phrases. The men and women he depicted in his novels and short stories were both realistic and human.

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Kanaiyāḷiyin Kanavu (The Dream of Kanaiyazhi) was an excellent study of the youthful reactions of several young men of a village to the arrival of a charming young lady. *Kaḷvanin Kātalī* (The Thief's Sweetheart) serialized in *Vikaṭan* was another successful novel. It was a marvellous piece of narration with a quick succession of dramatic episodes.

Kalki's *Tyāga Bhūmi* (The Land of Selfless Sacrifice, 1939) centred on the unhappy life of a young woman, Savitri. The innocent girl from the village is later transformed into a sophisticated ultra-modern lady with progressive views on the liberation of women. The estranged husband and wife are reunited ultimately when both of them are inextricably drawn into the struggle for national freedom. All the confusion and conflict that come to the surface at the time of radical social transformation are brought out deftly in *Tyāga Bhūmi*. It was during the same period that R. K. Narayan's *Svāmiyum Snēhitargaḷum* (Swami and Friends) was published as a serial. This delightful novel for youngsters provided the first stimulus to writing for children.

Maṇikkoḍi, a journal founded by Ku. Srinivasan in 1933 blazed a new trail in Tamil journalism. Its birth was a great event of epochal significance. The format and content were totally new and the journal was the forum for a band of highly original and sensitive writers of the time. Pudumaipithan (Cho. Vṛddhācalam, 1906–48), B. S. Ramaiah (Rāmaiya, b. 1905) and Va. Raa (V. Rāmasvāmi Iyeṅgār, 1889–1951) were considered the trinity of Literary Renaissance ushered in by *Maṇikkoḍi*. The accent was on raising the taste of the readers. New literary norms were outlined and propagated, rejecting whatever was trivial. Well-translated pieces of foreign literature helped to acquaint Tamil readers with literary experiments in other parts of the world. Unfortunately the magazine closed down after five years of eventful existence.

Tunbakkēṇi (The Pool of Misery) is one of the short novels by Pudumaipithan. It deals with the agony of Tamil labourers in the tea-plantations of Ceylon. Pudumaipithan's prose is incisive like a surgeon's scalpel opening up with deft precision the infected tissues of contemporary life. Here is an excerpt from *Tunbakkēṇi* (Section IV):

> Vellaiyan was released from jail. Instead of going home, he went to his father-in-law's house. It was a great disappointment, for Maruti (his wife) was not there. He was broken-hearted even as he left the jail. Only the memories of Maruti were green and persistent.
>
> Borrowing a little money from his father-in-law, Vellaiyan set out to see Maruti at the tea-plantation. The motor bus reached 'Wattarpalam' (waterfalls) in the evening. Vellaiyan got down from the bus and asked the people around about Maruti. They smiled and pointed towards a hut near the bungalow on the hill.
>
> Vellaiyan started walking towards the hut. It was dusk. The light was failing. An Englishman and his wife were coming down the road, with their hands round each other's waist, laughing and talking.
>
> Thoughts of Maruti welled up in Vellaiyan's mind.
>
> He knocked on the door of the hut. 'Who's that?' came the feeble voice of a woman from inside. The voice was plaintive and despondent. Vellaiyan could not believe it was hers.
>
> 'Is it Maruti?'
>
> Vellaiyan opened the door. Maruti was lying on a woollen blanket. The child lay asleep by her side.
>
> A smoky kerosene lamp was burning in a niche in the wall.
>
> Vellaiyan was shocked. Maruti first thought it was a ghost. Still it was the husband's ghost. She sat up. 'Is it Vellaiyan?'
>
> It was Vellaiyan indeed. He made a move to hold her hand.
>
> 'Don't touch me,' she waved him away. 'Can't you see what is all over my body.' She showed her back and hands. (The skin was studded with syphilitic eruptions.) It was 'Farangi' disease.
>
> Vellaiyan's heart sank. Some one dealt hammer-blows at his heart.
>
> 'This is the customary thing here.'
>
> Vellaiyan didn't say anything. (A few moments later, he thought aloud) 'We must leave the place.'
>
> 'I cannot go with you. Take the child away,' said she. Vellaiyan eyed the sleeping child with affection. It was his child. But wait, it may be somebody else's. Jealousy (was welling up).
>
> 'It is your child,' said she.
>
> 'Swear?'
>
> 'I swear.'
>
> 'The old woman died only last year.'
>
> Vellaiyan made no comment.
>
> Maruti opened her tin-box and took out a bunch of five-rupee notes—two hundred rupees in all. The money was given to her by the 'Durai' (Englishman) from time to time.
>
> 'My earnings....Look after the child.' She held out the bunch of notes.
>
> The two didn't have a wink of sleep that night. They talked and it was day-break before they finished talking.
>
> She handed the child to him: 'Her name is Vellachi.'
>
> She stood on a rock and watched till the man and the child disappeared in the distant horizon.
>
> 'Over there lies our village,' she mumbled to herself.
>
> A smile, A sigh.

Dark clouds gathered on the political horizon. The Satyagraha movement of Mahatma Gandhi needed the entire energies of the nation to fight for national freedom. The

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main thrust of literature was to fan the political upsurge in the country against the British.

Ra. Krishnamurthi 'Kalki' and his friends started *Kalki* which became a serious rival to the popular weekly *Ānanda Vikaṭan*. *Kumudam* was also born during the war-period with S. A. P. Annamalai as the editor. This journal evolved later into a weekly magazine with a massive circulation. *Kalai Magaḷ* (1932) which has been the premier Tamil monthly on language and literature for over a decade became popular with its accent on short stories and novels.

Translations from Other Languages

As early as 1908, a Tamil version of the Malayalam novel *Indulēkha* was serialized in the journal *Vivēka Bōdhini* (*Tamiḷ Nōvel: Nūrāṇḍu Varalāru Vaḷarciyum*, ed. P. G. Sundararajan 'Chitti' and S. Sivapathasundaram, 1977, p. 153). The great novels of Bankim Chandra, Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra were made available to Tamil readers in excellent translations made by T. N. Kumaraswami, 'Kumudini' and A. K. Jayaraman. Yogi Suddhananda Bharati's translation of two French novels, *Les Miserables* and *The Laughing Man* opened up an entirely new horizon to the writers of fiction. Some Marathi novels were also translated into Tamil. V. S. Khandekar's *Jalalili Mohar* rendered excellently into Tamil as *Karugiya Moṭṭu* by Ka. Śri. Śri. (Ka. Śri. Śrinivasacharya) was at once perceived as an event of far-reaching significance to modern Tamil fiction.

At the Cross Roads

The originators of the Tamil Literary Renaissance in the early thirties mourned the fall in literary standards caused, perhaps, by the democratization of literature. Some of the *Maṇikkoḍi* group of writers turned literary critics. Ka. Naa. Subramanyam, the veteran writer and critic was the solitary voice that decried commercialism and vulgarity in the new writings. However, his was a cry in the wilderness. Writers went on merrily reeling off novels and short stories, inventing newer and newer gimmicks to hold the readers' attention. Those who did not like the new trends started their own protest-magazines through which their writings reached a small coterie of readers. The writers belonging to the 'Dravida' movement had their own periodicals, entirely different in tone and content. None of them rose to the level of the mass-circulation weeklies that occupied the centre of the stage. The ideological slant was kept alive in all their writings. Thus, the three strands of modern Tamil literature entered the spinning of fiction, each for its own purpose, driven by the wild forces of creativity generated by the closing years of the Freedom struggle and the jubilant decades of Republican India. The output of fiction was on an enormous scale and the demand continued to increase. Periodicals resorted to novel and short story competitions in honour of literary patrons to stimulate and encourage new and better writing.

The Kalki Dynasty. Kalki's *Pārtipan Kanavu* (King Partipan's Dream) started appearing as a serial story in *Kalki* in 1941. Written on a historical subject the novel was the first of its kind in Tamil. It depicted the heroic struggle of the Chola king to throw off the political yoke of the Pallavas. The oblique but obvious reference was to the Indian fight for freedom from British rule. This novel heralded the scores of historical novels that came to be written in the next three decades. 'Kalki' set the tone and style for other younger writers to follow with a measure of success in the years that followed. Egged on by the tremendous response to *Pārtipan Kanavu*, Kalki planned and wrote two more historical novels of inordinate length *Śivakāmiyin Śapatam* (The Vow of Sivakami, 1945) and *Ponniyin Śelvan* (The Prince of Ponni, 1950). *Ponniyin Śelvan* is a voluminous historical novel dealing with the early life of the great king Rajaraja Chola who decides to sacrifice the Imperial throne and make way for his uncle Uttama Chola. He also decides to sacrifice his first love for the sake of the Empire.

Ponnan, the boatman, Sivanadiyar, the emperor in disguise, Kundavi, the princess, Sivakami, the danseuse, Ayana Chirpi, the master-sculptor, Vandiyathevan, Pazhuvettaraiyars of Kodumpalur (barons of the Chola kingdom) and scores of other characters, spies and soldiers, astrologers and priests, ministers and mendicants—all these men and women from a forgotten age of Tamil history peopled Kalki's novels. The intricate twists and turns in the story, the skilful manipulation of episodes to suit the demands of a magazine serial, the vivid portrayal of historical personages, the graphic description of palaces, secret tunnels, structures, underground forts and arsenals, the judicious blending of historical and fictional material, the use of a kind of literary Tamil prose in keeping with the theme, the occasional recourse to quotations from the literature of the relevant period of time—in all this and much more besides, Kalki stood out as the great innovator. More or less the same techniques were adopted by the others who took to the historical novel which has become a distinctive 'genre' in Tamil fiction. One might liken Kalki to Emperor Rajaraja Chola who founded the dynasty of the Cholas as Kalki founded historical fiction in Tamil.

Alai Ōṣai (The Sound of the Waves, 1953) by Kalki is a magnificent novel written against the background of the Indian Freedom Movement. It narrates the story of the star-crossed lovers, Raghavan and Dharini. Raghavan, however, marries another girl Sita and the couple happen to meet Dharini assumed dead long ago, under the shadow of the Taj Mahal. A few years later Sita dies and Raghavan returns to Dharini who is maimed during the partition riots.

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It was this novel that won for the author posthumously the Sahitya Akademi Award (1956). The novel has been translated into some of the other Indian languages.

Among the writers who cherished the *Maṇikkoḍi* movement was Sankararam. His *Maṇṇāsai* (Land-Desire) was the first modern novel to deal with the complex issues of village life. Ra. Shanmukha Sundaram, a writer of rare perception, is the author of eight novels and several short stories. His *Nāgammāḷ*, is a unique novel based on rural life in Kongunadu (Coimbatore-Salem districts). Va. Raa was a crusader for modernism in Tamil language and literature. His *Kōtaittīvu* (1945) depicted a utopian land ruled by women. This novel was a reassessment of the values of life as propounded by the male-dominated society. Ku. Pa. Rajagopalan's unfinished *Vērōṭṭam* (The Roots, 1944) employed a new technique to deal with an unconventional theme.

Ka. Naa. Subramanyam's *Poyittēvu* (False God, 1946) was biographical in form. Somu Mudaliar, the hero of the novel is ostracized on account of his illegitimate birth. Rewarded by his master for an 'act' of exemplary courage he rises from the abject poverty and squalor of Mettu street to amass a fortune, and in the process falls a victim to the temptations of the false gods. He is imprisoned for an 'economic' offence. The single-page third book of the novel describes how Somu Paṇḍāram (Sannyasi Somu) lies dead on the roadside.

The *Maṇikkoḍi* experiments continued to inspire some old and new writers who shunned popular journalism which, they thought, passed for real literature. Ka. Naa. Subramanyam has made several attempts to go off the beaten track with regard to both style and contents. His novel *Asuragaṇam* (The Demon-type, 1959) is on the imaginings of an over-wrought mind. The author has adopted in some of his works the method of the 'stream of consciousness'. Opinions differ on the extent of success that the author has been able to achieve.

Chi. Su. Chellappa's *Jīvanāmśam* (Alimony, 1962) is a study of a widow's relationships within the family circle. A lawsuit for alimony filed by her brother for her sake helps to keep alive the shared emotions of yester-years. The novel written with a delicate sensibility ends on a note of happy reconciliation.

N. Chidambara Subramanyan's *Idayanādam* (Song of the Heart, 1952) is based on the meticulously principled life of a musician who chooses to sacrifice himself at the altar of the art he worships. Krishna Baghavathar's sacred ideal was music and he survives many trials and tribulations. Ultimately he loses his voice. The tragic circumstance is described with great poetic beauty. The musician now soars to the heights of Silence beyond the frontiers of Music.

N. Chidambarasubramanian, Chi. Su. Chellappa and La. Sa. Ramamrutam inspired many young writers with their novels. Ramamrutam's *Putra* and *Apita* were unique in their semi-poetic style bringing out wave after wave of delicate sensibilities out of humdrum situations.

Balakrishna Naidu's *Danayakkan Kōṭṭai* is a historical novel dealing with the reign of Tipu Sultan of Mysore. It was refreshingly different from the usual type of such novels. The author with his direct and forceful style reconstructs with an incredible verisimilitude the life of the rulers and the ruled in that turbulent age of transition. A wealth of historical material has been skilfully woven into the gripping story that revolves round Hyder Ali, Tipu Sultan, the the Sultana (Tipu's mother), and Lakshmi Ammanni, the dowager-queen of the Mysore Wodeyar rulers. The fictional characters Veeramma and her brother rise to heroic stature in keeping with the theme of the novel.

The Rationalist Movement

C. N. Annadurai (1909–69), the founder of the D.M.K., was a versatile writer and orator. His articles on political and social problems had a lot of punch in them. His use of rhetoric was extremely effective, and his novels fashioned on the models of the early thirties were well-constructed and packed with dramatic situations. His chief themes were the eradication of social evils and superstition.

Mu. Karunanidhi wields a powerful pen and his novels speak of the many ills of the caste-ridden society in an inimitable way. Though flowery and flamboyant at times, Karunanidhi's prose is among the finest in modern Tamil literature.

Mu. Varadarajan (1912–74), a great Tamil scholar and academician, wrote a series of novels on the predicament of contemporary society. His prose had all the charm of the Tamil poetical tradition. His idealism was balanced by the stark realism of some of his novels.

Thematic Variations

The Kalaimagal Narayanaswami Iyer Memorial Novel Competition, held each year from 1946, provided young writers with a stimulus. During the period 1940–60, a number of novels on social and other themes were written by authors like Narana Duraikannan, Ku. Rajavelu, P. M. Kannan, 'Umachandran' (P. Ramachandran), 'Arvi' (R. Venkataraman), 'Vasavan' (Srinivasan), 'Anuthama' (Rajeswari Padmanabhan), R. S. Nallaperumal, Sukhi Subramanian, and others. Kothamangalam Subbu's novel *Tillāna Mohanāmbal* created a stir. This was later made into a film. T.M.C. Raghunathan's *Pañjum Paśiyum* (Cotton and Hunger) dealt with the need for giving an economic content to the political freedom won from the foreigner. Based on the life of handloom-weavers, the novel depicted the class-struggle and the rise of capitalism after the decay of feudalism.

Akilon (P. V. Akilāṇḍam, b. 1923) is among the most

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outstanding of present-day novelists. He has written many novels on historical and social themes. *Pālmara Kāṭṭinile* (In the Rubber Forest, 1977) is based on the life of Tamilian labour in the Malaysian rubber plantations. Akilon is the recipient of several prizes and awards. The historical novel *Vēṅgaiyin Maindan* (The Tiger's Son, 1961) won the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1968. The Jnanpith Award was presented to him in 1975 for his novel *Cittira Pāvai* (Portrait of a Woman, 1968), adjudged the best creative literary work published in Indian languages during 1959–68. Anandi who is in love with Annamalai, an ideal artist, is forced to marry Manickam, an unscrupulous adventurer who wrecks the life of many honest people. Ultimately Anandi rises in rebellion against the hidebound rigidity of empty social customs. When one day Manickam snatches her *Maṅgalasūtram*, she decides to get away from him and to join her friend Annamalai.

Akilon has written more than fifteen novels on a variety of themes. His maiden attempt at novel writing was *Peṇṇə* (Woman, 1946) which won for him the Kalaimagal Narayanaswami Iyer Memorial Prize. The story is woven around the Freedom struggle and an undercurrent of patriotic fervour runs through the work. His *Pāvai Viḷakku* (The Lamp-bearing Damsel, 1958) created an unprecedented emotional impact on thousands of readers at the time of its serialization in the weekly *Kalki*. It depicted the tenacious love of a girl for a married man who faces the agony of the dilemma. *Ponmalar* (Flower of Gold, 1965) is a successful study of womanhood. Life is an ordeal by fire for Dr Shantha who goes through the vicissitudes of life with immense courage.

Akilon's works are invariably imbued with a social purpose and concern for the underdog.

Mi. Pa. Somasundaram (Sōmu, b. 1921), winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, is among the outstanding short-story writers/novelists of today. His novels *Ravi Candrika*, *Kaḍal Kaṇṭa Kanavu* (The Dream of the Sea), *Nandāvanam* and *Veṇṇilāvu Peṇṇaraśi* (Full Moon Damsel) were serialized in *Kalki*. Somu's prose is a happy blend of the simple and the complex, of the concrete and the abstract. His deep appreciation of the various facets of the great panorama of life, his aesthetic perception of the nuances of human emotions and motives and the chiselled artistry of his prose have all combined to add a new dimension to the prose literature of the period.

An Excerpt from *Ravi Candrika*

Ravindran looked at the box (sent by his friend, Suresh). The musical instrument must have been bought that very day! He opened it. The 'fresh' smell filled the air.

From the 'pūja' room came the fragrance of 'dhūpam' (incense). It made its way into the mellowed heart of Ravindran. He felt as though the Nandi that lay between him and the Goddess Saraswati for some time had moved to one side. (The image of the sacred bull, Nandi, hides the Linga of the sanctum sanctorum from the Harijan Saint Nandanar.) In his mind's eye, the Goddess of Music, Saraswati, was seated on the throne in great splendour and the seven damsels of 'Swaras' holding hands together danced before the divine Muse. He was slowly slipping into a trance. He took out the flute (from the box) and held it to his lips. A magnetic wave enlivened his fingers. In his heart, the fountain-source of sound opened out. And lo, a torrent of music gushed out of the flute.

Was it the raga *Śaṅkarābharaṇam*! How it frisked and danced with superhuman power!

Chandrika who was sitting upstairs lost in thought heard the charmed music. She went towards the staircase but halted without treading on the first step, upon seeing Ravindran in a state of trance. How long she stood there transfixed, she didn't know herself.

The ragas *Śaṅkarābharaṇam*, *Bhairavi*, *Kēdāragauḷa*, and *Sāvēri* came in single file and accorded *darśan*. Ravindran was soaring sky-high on the waves of music from the flute, towards the preternatural dreamland beyond the ken of man and his pettiness; beyond the world and its bustle! Hark, it is the 'madhyama' note! How delightful it is! Through the soft perforations of the flute, there glides the raga *Punnāgavarāḷi* waving and swaying! The concordant notes are heard entwined in unison! What tonal quality and how exquisitely pleasing!

'Sandilyan', 'Jegasirpiyan', Ko.Vi. Manisekharan, Naa. Parthasarathy, Venugopalan, Vikraman (S. Vembu), Aru, Ramanathan and a few others wrote many historical novels relating to different periods of South Indian history.

Naa. Parthasarathy's many novels survey the whole panorama of life with a sense of mission. Parthasarathy, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, is the author of more than a dozen novels and collections of short stories. The artistic and the didactic are blended with skill and discretion. The author takes the readers with him to have a glimpse of the ideal life unstained by the meanness of the modern age. Naa. Parthasarathy is an outspoken crusader for the restoration of social and cultural values in everyday life. *Kuriñji Malar*, *Mani Pallavam* and *Samudāya Vithi* are some of his outstanding novels. According to T. V. Veerasamy, eminent critic, *Kuriñji Malar* (The Kurinji Flower, 1962) depicts with an epic charm the journey of the loving couple Poorani and Aravinda towards their glorious ideals. The ancient ideal of home-based conjugal bliss is pitted against the socio-political milieu of the present day. In the critic's words the novel points out that there is no poetry in life today but there is hunger.

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Off the Beaten Track

Sundara Ramaswami has written several short stories of merit. His only novel *Oru Puḷiya Marattin Katai* (The Story of a Tamarind Tree, 1956) is a unique satire on life in a small town. The vitality of the Nāñjilnāḍ (Kanyakumari district) dialect fills each page of the novel. As the title indicates, it is the story of the life and death of a tamarind tree. The involvement of the people in the vicissitudes of the tree's life is described by the author with great tenderness. Here is an excerpt from the novel:

> I still remember the days when the impending 'end' of the Tamarind tree was the talk of the town. The people showed so much interest in the affair! They talked about it endlessly as though it was their own family problem. It was a serious issue which was going to decide the balance of strength between two opposing camps.... To the Municipality, this was a prestige issue.... Some people were saying that a contract had been offered to an outsider for the removal of the tree and that the Municipality had approached Trivandrum (the capital city) for additional police help and the exact date of cutting down the tree would be fixed on receipt of a reply.
>
> And then the most unexpected thing happened!
>
> One fine morning, the whole place was swarming with men and women. The Tamarind tree, they said, had become a goddess.
>
> Upon receiving the news, we rushed to the road-junction where the tree stood. I still remember how we were jostled in the milling crowd. Under the hot sun, we approached the place and watched the goings on, completely absorbed in the scene....
>
> In front of the Tamarind tree, the 'worship' was in full swing. At the foot of the tree, there was a heap of *Araḷi* and *Pichi* flowers and lotus-buds. At the summit of the flower-heap the bark of the tree had been peeled off from a circular portion where the silverface-mask of the 'Amman' (Mother Goddess) had been installed. Red 'kumkum' had been applied to the forehead. The eyes were covered with green gems. The face glistened bright with the morning rays of the sun. Smoke from the joss-sticks filled the air....
>
> The assembled people laughed and said that the contractor (for cutting down the Tamarind tree) had already left the town for good after expressing his inability to carry out the assignment.

T. Janakiraman (Jānakirāman, 1921–82), an outstanding writer of short stories, wrote *Amma Vandāḷ* (Mother Came) on an extremely delicate theme. It was published as a serial in The *Illustrated Weekly of India* in an English translation by M. Krishnan under the title *Appu's Mother*. Janakiraman's *Mōha Muḷ* (The Thorns of Desire, 1961) is a long novel, the saga of the young man Babu's love for Yamuna, a girl ten years his senior. Babu, a rural lad has a passion for music. This brings him close to Yamuna, the daughter of his father's friend. Years pass. Due to ill-luck Yamuna remains still unmarried. Ultimately their friendship matures into a true bond of affection.

Janakiraman weaves his story with such directness and assurance that you have the illusion of a face-to-face narration. The conversational style is kept up throughout the eight hundred odd pages of this gripping novel. All the flavour, colour and tone of Tamil speech in the Thanjavur region are captured 'alive', giving the novel a cinematographic flow of image and sound. Janakiraman has written about eight novels and numerous short stories. He won the Sahitya Akademi Award for 1979.

View from a Different Angle

Another outstanding contribution to the novel literature in Tamil came from the pen of Jayakanthan who shook the popular magazines with his bold short stories and novelettes on uncommon themes hitherto considered taboo for the Tamil writer. Jayakanthan's complex mind grasped the intricacies of human behaviour with great insight and delineated them with understanding. He shed the doctrinaire approach of the early period of his career to discover the 'mystique' of life in his inimitable style. His example brought about a new vision among the younger writers who came under his intoxicating spell. His novels include *Yārukkāga Aḻuthān* (translated as *Joseph Wept* by A. A. Hakim), *Vāḻkkai Aḻaikkiradu* (Life Welcomes), *Śila Nēraṅgaḷil Śila Manitarhaḷ* (Certain People at Certain Times).

There is always a current of social purpose running through Rajam Krishnan's novels. She has made on the spot studies and written about the dacoits of the Chambal Valley, the workers of Development projects, the tribals of the Nilgiris, etc. Her deep attachment to the cultural values of India along with the robust common sense attitude towards the economic betterment of the people are discernible in the delineation of various characters in her novels. She has more than a dozen novels to her credit. Her *Kuriñjitēn* (Honey of the Hills, 1963) is a penetrating analysis based on personal observation of a semiprimitive society in transition. The fast changing environment rakes up dormant emotional and moral conflicts amongst the members. However, the basic goodness of human nature that keeps the tribe from disintegration is delineated convincingly by the authoress.

Naḍikai (Actress) by P. C. Ganesan is autobiographical in form. It traces the life of a film-actress. In spite of her violent and soul-shattering experiences Rohini, the actress, keeps alive in a secret niche of her soul the sacred little flame of love she bore Mohan, a freedom fighter. The moral

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ugliness of the life around her is powerless to stain the depths of her soul.

Cāyāvanam (The Indestructible Forest, 1969) by Sa. Kandaswami (b. 1940) is the story of the destruction of the indestructible forest. Chayavanam was inaccessible to man. However, a man enters the forest making his way through the darkness. The jungle resents it and there ensues a grim battle between man and the jungle. Chidambaram goes abroad and returns to his native village, Chayavanam. He plans to build a sugar factory. All the trees standing on the site are cut down mercilessly to make room for the factory. The novel describes the ills of industrialization in a country with age-old vital traditions.

Among the younger luminaries Neela Padmanabhan (b. 1938) stands out as a novelist of rare psychological insight. His characters come alive with a few deft and evocative pen strokes. His novel entitled *Uṟavukaḷ* (The Consanguines, 1975) won the Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar Memorial Award in 1977. An engineer by profession, Neela Padmanabhan has successfully utilized the vivid phrases and idioms of his native Kanyakumari district and South Kerala. Two more novels, *Talaimuraikaḷ* (Generations) and *Paḷḷikoṇḍapuram* have also received critical acclaim. In *Talaimuraikaḷ* Unnamalai Achi's marriage takes place with all pomp and ceremony according to the caste customs but she becomes a widow after a short while. The family is in a virtual state of collapse. Achi's brother takes upon his shoulders the onerous burden of dispelling the gloom in the family and bringing in a measure of hope and confidence. The communities involved in the story are Chettiars, Nayars and Nadars. *Talaimuraikaḷ*, according to Kamil Zvelebil, is not easy reading with its overwhelming wealth of details, its proverbs, sayings and folk-songs. It is as much a fruit of painstaking study as of artistic intuition and inspiration (*History of Tamil Literature*, ed. Gonda).

The Contemporary Scene

During the succeeding two decades, the rise of the popular magazines catering to the younger generation of free India, was phenomenal. Apart from the Sunday special editions of Tamil daily newspapers (*Dinamaṇi*, *Svadēśamitran*, *Dina Thanthi*, *Dinamalar*, *Navaśakti*, *Nava India*, etc.), the weekly/monthly magazines featured serial stories on a variety of themes and subjects. *Kumudam*, *Vāranthari Rāṇi*, *Ānanda Vikaṭan*, *Kalki*, *Kalai Magal*, *Amuda Surabhi*, *Dinamaṇi Kadir*, etc. are constantly on the look-out for new talent.

R. K. Rangarajan, Manian, Hema Anandateerthan, Jothirlatha Girija, Vimala Ramani, Pushpa Thangadurai, Kurumbur Kuppusami, Sujatha, Sivasankari, Indumati, and Vasanti are among the most successful novelists of the new category. Some of the novels of the Poet Laureate Kannadasan written on utterly new and old themes prove to be extremely popular.

A separate but lively stream of literature was the contribution of the writers belonging to the 'Dravida' movement. A. V. P. Asaithambi, Thillai Villalan, S. S. Thennarasu and Radhamanalan have written novels of considerable merit on the predicament of the individual and social conflicts.

While the mainstream of creative activity flowed on, a few writers branched off into the medium of the novel. Hepsiba Jesudasan, novelist and critic, is an example of this category Her *Putten Vīḍu* (New House, 1964) is a fascinating study of rural life in the Tamil-speaking district of the erstwhile Travancore state. The political developments form the backdrop and the story traces the shifting fortunes of a family with great sympathy. The language has all the flavour of the rustic Tamil spoken in the district bordering on Kerala.

Indira Parthasarathy, a Tamil scholar wrote in a rather cynical vein. *Kurutippunal* (The Blood, 1975) that won for him the Shaitya Akademi Award brought into sharp focus the crudity of social conflicts rooted in caste economic exploitation, sexual jealousy, conservatism, etc.

Ashokamitran (b. 1932) is a writer of fine sensibilities. His novel *Taṇṇīr* (Water, 1973) dealt with the city and the water famine that threw it out of gear.

Low-priced editions of some important novels of popular authors have created a new vogue in book-reading among the people. Several publishers bring out a short novel by a selected author each month. The demand for historical novels has by no means decreased. But the general trend is towards uncommon themes with sexual overtones.

Conclusion

A hundred years have rolled by since the publication of the first novel in 1879. The novel, though an alien art-form, has taken firm root in the Tamil soil. In the hands of three generations of Tamil writers, the Tamil novel has risen to great heights, occasionally attracting nation-wide attention. Most of the Sahitya Akademi Awards in Tamil have gone to the novelists. The coveted Jnanpith Award has also been won by Akilon's novel *Cittira Pāvai*. Between Vedanayakam Pillai, the Father of the Tamil Novel and Akilon, winner of the most important National Award for literature, gifted men and women wrote novels on a wide variety of themes.

Events and movements of the Indian Freedom struggle, the turbulent years of the Second World War, the unseemly scramble for power and position during the post-Independence decades, the unsettling effect of the economic imbalances caused by maldistribution of wealth, the appalling poverty of the teeming millions living in the villages and city slums have all provided a backdrop for many novels depicting the changing values of Tamil Society,

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Apart from the prolific novelists, there are also some whose reputation rests on a single novel.

A perspective study of the hundred years of the Tamil novel has been made by P. G. Sundararajan 'Chitti' and S. Sivapatha Sundaram. Their monumental work entitled *Tamiḷ Nōvel: Nūrāṇḍu Varalārum Vaḷarciyum* (1977) traces the origin and development of the Tamil novel in meticulous detail. Many facts hitherto unknown to the general reader have been brought to light by the painstaking research of learned critics.

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Telugu

S. R. M. KONDAMUDI

Origin and Growth

The Telugu *Navala* (novel) as a literary form is of comparatively recent origin. The pioneers in the field were indebted to the English authors to whom they were introduced in the latter half of the 19th century. But what is perhaps the first Telugu novel, *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra* (1872), was free from any English influences. Its author, Gopala Krishnamma Chetty (Gōpāla Kṛṣṇamma Ceṭṭi, 1849–1921), called it a modern epic and intended the same to be a prose fiction useful for Telugu students. In his introduction, the author said, 'I write this prose epic to depict the customs and conventions of the Telugu land so that they might be of use to the Telugu people'. *Cintāmaṇi* (1891), a popular 19th century journal, conducted competitions in novel writing and invited scripts, subject to four conditions, viz. the story be (a) fictitious, (b) an amalgam of valour and amour, (c) one that gives importance to the optimism buried in man's actions, and (d) of an individual.

These characteristics of a novel hold good even today. Kandukuri Viresalingam Pantulu (Kandukūri Vīrēśaliṅgam Paṅtulu, 1847–1919), a great social reformer of the 19th century and a pioneer in many modern literary forms, however, added another dimension when he stated that his books were written to demolish many of the prevalent fads and superstitions. The Telugu novel has over the years acquired a new realism and the capacity to present the experience of individuals forcefully and resourcefully.

The history of the Telugu novel, based on its content and form, can be divided into four periods. The first period roughly begins from 1870 and ends by 1900. The second period comes to a close by 1920, the third by 1942 and the fourth commences from 1942.

There is a lot of controversy over which was the first Telugu novel. Lovers of the Telugu epic tradition feel that the Telugu novel had its origins in the long narrative poem *Kaḷāpūrṇōdayamu* (The Birth of Kalapurnodaya), a *prabandha* by Pingali Surana (Piṅgaḷi Sūrana, 16th century). Others contend that Kokkonda Venkata Ratnam Pantulu's (Kokkoṇḍa Vēṅkaṭa Ratnam Pantulu) *Mahā Śvēta* (1867)

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deserves the honour. Critics with a historical perspective argue that Narahari Gopala Krishnamma Chetty's *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra* was the first Telugu novel. Litterateurs who take form and philosophy into account feel that Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu's *Rājaśēkhara Caritra* (1880) alone is qualified for such consideration.

Gopala Krishnamma Chetty explained in his foreword that he wrote *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra* to help students as there was no prose epic in Telugu until then. Viresalingam Pantulu was of the opinion that his novel was the first breakthrough of its kind and that it was the result of English influence, inspired by Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

The Hindu, the Madras daily, reviewing *Rājaśēkhara Caritra*, called it the first Telugu novel. But the *Fort St. George Gazette* (Supplement, September 1872) declared that *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra* 'is apparently the first attempt ever made in this part of India at novel writing in Telugu prose'. It is likely that *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra* is, chronologically, the first Telugu book that can be classified as a novel, but if structure, characterization and language are considered, then *Rājaśēkhara Caritra* is the first Telugu book to make an impact as a novel.

Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra makes use of highly Sanskritized Telugu. Though it has a special charm about it, abounding in flights of imagination, this book lacks a well-knit plot. It has a subtitle 'Sōnābāi Pariṇayamu' (Wedding of Sonabai) which is a reference to the love affair of Sri Raṅga Rāju and Raṅga Nāyika (who, while in disguise, is known as Sōnābāi). The author criticizes caste differences, Hindu customs and conventions and the dead weight of tradition in this novel.

Rājaśēkhara Caritra was serialized in *Vivēka Candrika* in 1878 before being published in book form. In 1891, Viresalingam Pantulu wrote two novelettes under one title, *Satyarāja Purvadēśa Yātralu* (Travels of Satyaraja in Eastern Countries). One of these novelettes is a translation of a part of *Gulliver's Travels*, the other is an ironical attempt to decry the fads and superstitions prevailing among the Telugu people of his day. In the novelette of the title, Viresalingam laments for Telugu womanhood. His hero Satyaraju goes to Kerala where the matriarchal system of inheritance prevails and finds women there enjoying many rights and privileges while the men, except for the Karanavars, are in a secondary position.

In 1892, Panappakam Anantacharyulu (Panappākam Anantācāryulu, 1860–1921) published *Mañjuvāṇi Vijayamu* (Victory of Manjuvani), a mordacious novel. Manjuvani, the daughter of a businessman, falls in love with a prince. But before she can marry him, she has to endure great suffering. She exhibits extraordinary perseverance in the process.

Sanjīvarāya Caritramu (1893) by Tallapragada Suryanarayana (Tallapragada Sūryanārāyaṇa) was almost a copy of *Rājaśēkhara Caritra*. But his *Subbarāo* (1894) was the first Telugu novel to describe the Telugu domestic life with all its charms and complexities. In it the quarrels between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law, their selfishness and man's debauched nature are discussed at length.

Namburu Tirunarayanaswamy, Reṇṭāla Veṅkaṭa Subba Rao, Bulusu Pāpayya Śāstry, Rājā Mantripragaḍa Bhujanga Rao and Kurapuli Lakshminarasaiah are other significant novelists of the first period. After their exit, a new set of young men entered the literary arena, they were college bred and were conscious of their social obligations. Among them were such famous writers as Goṭēṭi Manga Rāju, Ṭēkumaḷḷa Rājagōpāla Rāo and Khaṇḍavalli Rāmacandrudu. Several of their novels, such as *Dharmāvatī Vilāsam*, *Trivikrama Vilāsamu* (1895) and *Mālatī Rāghavamu* won *Cintāmaṇi* prizes. To the same period belong other popular works such as *Bhāskara Vilāsam* (1895), *Manōrama* (1899) and *Bakṣi* (1899).

Khandavalli Ramachandrudu is perhaps the most successful novelist of the late 19th century. He was twice the recipient of the *Cintāmaṇi* award. In 1893 he wrote *Dharmāvatī Vilāsam* and in 1896 *Lakṣmī Sundara Vijayam*. In the former, he follows the example set by *Śrī Raṅga Rāja Caritra*. He places his characters in the time of the Gajapathees (16th century) and portrays in this quasi-historical novel a woman's tact and valour. The heroine selects her husband in a *swayamvaram* (personal selection), as in olden times, and, when he is in dire straits, goes to the king's court, argues with her opponents and wins her case. The author might have had Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* in mind while writing this novel. His next novel *Mālatī Rāghavamu* (1898) is also a love story and takes its title from two principal characters. *Lakṣmī Sundara Vijayam* was a prize-winning novel, set in the court of Tippu Sultan. There is not much in this novel to call it historical, it is the story of an actor, told in a romantic manner.

An Epoch-Making Event

The appearance of Chilakamarti Lakshmi Narasimham Pantulu (Cilakamarthi Lakṣmī Narasiṁham Pantulu, 1867–1946) was an epoch-making event. He was a disciple of Viresalingam Pantulu. The element of historicity involved in his works is marginal, he mainly drew on his fertile imagination and exploited his flair for picturesque description. Chilakamarthi started writing in 1894 and continued to write up to 1921. During the first ten years of his writing career, he produced *Rāmacandra Vijayam*, *Hēmalatha*, *Ahalya Bāī* and *Karpūra Mañjari*. Of these, *Rāmacandra Vijayam* is a social novel, the other three are historical. In his novels the characters seem real and the Gōdāvari delta captivating. He has given importance to

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narrative, plot construction and social criticism; the incidents have not been artificially created. In style and characterization his novels are commendable. *Rāmacandra Vijayam* (1896), which may be considered a major realistic novel in Telugu, is the story of an orphan boy Ramachandrudu. How he longs for an education, how he struggles to make a decent living, how he swallows insults in the process and how he ultimately overcomes the impediments, are all convincingly narrated. In this novel, the life in the Kōnasīma area, where the Godavari meets the sea, is beautifully described.

Several novels written between 1894 and 1910 were bitterly critical of casteism, religious bigotry and class fanaticism. While in the novels of Kandukuri Viresalingam, the hero generally starts life rich and becomes poor as the days roll by, in the novels of Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham, the hero starts his life poor, suffers terribly, but finally finds fortune favouring him.

In 1896, the periodical *Cintāmaṇi* held a competition for historical novels, stating as a condition that the story must be interwoven artistically and accurately with the geography and history of the country. Writers were also advised to read Walter Scott and Jules Verne and assimilate their techniques. Chilakamarthi and Khandavalli Ramachandrudu followed those instructions faithfully.

Chilakamarthi's *Gaṇapati* (1896), Venkata Parvateeswara Kavulu's *Mātṛu Mandiramu* (Mother's Abode, 1893), Sripāda Subrahmaṇya Śāstry's *Viṣa Bhujagam* (Poisonous Snake, 1917) and Tallāpragaḍa's *Hēlāvati* are novels about social problems such as the dowry system and the unjust practice of taking a second wife while the first wife is alive. *Mātṛu Mandiramu* supports the cause of the Harijans and chastises caste Hindus for their feeling of superiority. Gandhiji had not yet given his clarion call to eradicate untouchability when this novel was written. The Telugu novelists, looking far into the future, had already turned their creative energies towards reformation. Among the prophets of social change, Chilakamarthi occupies an honoured place. His masterpiece, *Gaṇapati*, is a combination of compassion and humour.

A New Age Dawns

The new age ushered in from 1900 can be described as the age of imitation and translation. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Indian Independence movement had gained momentum. English-educated youth had developed an antipathy towards the British, while accepting western values. This was an era of insubordination; it was also an age of self-realization and restraint. The Telugu novel tried to present these nationalistic feelings through the medium of historical writing. Sripada Subrahmanya Sastry (Śrīpada Subramaṇya Śāstri, 1891–1951) felt that the novel was the most appropriate medium to eulogize the intellectual and physical richness of the past and thereby remind the moderns of their obligations and rights. Bipinchandra Pal, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Rabindranath Tagore, the Bengal Trinity, were responsible for the Renaissance in Andhra, as Telugu novelists, drawn to them, began translating and adapting their books into Telugu.

The Vijnana Chandrika Grandha Mandali, the Veguchukka Grandha Mala and the Andhra Pracharini Grandha Mala, three well-known publishing houses published translations and adaptations that were bestsellers. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee was translated into Telugu by O. Y. Dorasvāmayya (1843–1903). *Kapāla Kuṇḍala* (1908) and *Ānanda Maṭham* (1907) became so popular that they were reprinted eight times in 15 years. *Kamala Kōmala* (1886), *Prafulla* (1909), *Kṛṣṇa Kāntuni Maraṇa Śāsanam* (1950) and *Rāja Siṁham* (1948) were among the better known novels that flooded the Telugu world of fiction. Among the adaptations from English novels, detective stories were the most popular.

Around 1910, the first demand was made by the Andhra Maha Sabha for an Andhra state to be formed on linguistic grounds. Taking their cue from this, Telugu novelists turned their attention to writing novels with a Telugu backdrop. *Śyāmaḷa* by Vēṅkaṭa Pāravatīswara Kavulu, *Śāpamu* (The Curse, 1917) by Chilakamarthi Lakshmi Narasimham, *Āndhra Rāṣṭramu* (1918) by Bhōgarāju Nārāyaṇa Mūrthy and *Vijayanagara Sāmrājyamu* (1914) by Duggirāla Rāghavachandrayya Satchastri should be specially mentioned in this context.

Period of Maturity

From 1920 onwards, the Telugu novel entered a period of maturity. Experimentalists carved out new paths; delightful instruction was subtly given through several novels. Some novelists took the national movement for their theme, others sought inspiration from history, yet others turned to social, humanistic and psychological writing.

Unnava Lakshminarayaṇa (Unnava Lakṣmināraāyaṇa, 1880–1953), with his one and only novel *Mālapalli* (The Colony of the Harijans, 1921), took Telugu literature by storm. This selfless politician and social reformer is deemed a great Telugu novelist on the basis of this one work alone. *Mālapalli* championed the 'untouchables' long before Gandhiji called them Harijans. This realistic novel, a comprehensive account of the political and the social history of the pre-Gandhian Andhra, made use of the spoken language and hit the headlines both for its technique as well as content. Ramadasu and Sangadāsu are the heroes of *Mālapalli*. Rāmadāsu, a Harijan, lives contentedly in the village of Mangaḷāpuram with his wife Mahalakshmamma and their three sons, Venkatadasu, Sangadasu, Rangadasu and daughter, Jyothi. Chowdari, a miserly landlord, gets angry with them as his son Ramanaidu befriends Sangadasu

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Sin) is an experiment in the philosophical style of Sophocles; *Daivōpahatulu* (The Star-Crossed) is full of naturalism and provides insights into human psychology; *Chikaṭlo Chiru Dīpam* (A Small Candle in Darkness) is a poignant criticism of the present educational system; and *Yajña Samidhalu* (Sacrificial Sticks, 1972) portrays the decadence and disorder which ransacked the political atmosphere on the eve of Independence. Korrapati Gangadhara Rao's (Korrapāṭi Gaṅgādhara Rāvu, b. 1923) novel *Lambāḍōḷla Rāmadāsu* (Ramadas of the Lambadees, 1970) is a satirical folkloric fantasy. Manjusri's novels *Jārudumeṭlu* (Slippery Stairs), *Jīvita Valayālu* (Circles of Life) and *Parājitulu* (The Defeated) move the reader to tears. Vihāri-Salivahana, two writers working as a team, throw light on a thousand obscure things and a multitude of indefinite feelings. In their novel *Vāhini* (The Stream), the heroine reinterprets the old prejudices. Pōranki Dakshiṇāmūrthy has written in the dialects of the three regions of Andhra Pradesh, the coastal districts, Rayalaseema and Telangana. His *Velugu Vennela Godavari* (Moonlit Godavari, 1971) has moving descriptions of the Godavari in all its shades and splendour as well as of some unexpected situations in life. Panyāla Ranganādha Rao's (b. 1920) *Gadvāla Tellacīra* (White Saree of Gadwala) is a case study of an extraordinary woman who is raped by her husband. She becomes mentally upset, but a young man of sterling nature brings her back to normalcy. Śārvari (pseud. of Rāmakṛṣṇa Śarma, b. 1930), in his *Laya Tappina Hṛdayalu* (Hearts Out of Tune) writes of love being a life-long devotion. Latha (Tenneṭi Hemalatha), on the other hand exposes the shams of the outworn formulae of love and conventional social relationships. In her novels *Piccivālla Svargam* (Madmen's Paradise), *Bhagavantuni Pañcāyati* (God's Court), *Mahānagaram lo Strī* (A Woman in a City), *Patha Vihīna* (The Pathless) and *Idi Tulasi Vanam* (This is a Sacred Grove) sensual passions and mysteries are shared with spiritual urges and inner longings. From the straightforward novel, she moved on to the psychological novel and the women's romance, and has now finally reached the mystic novel.

Yeddanapudi Sulochana Rani (Yeddanapūḍi Sulōcanā Rāṇi, b. 1938) is the most popular Telugu novelist today. With her masterly descriptions and dramatic style of presentation, Sulochana Rani casts a spell over her readers. Her popular novels *Secretary*, *Vijēta*, *Mīnā Baṅgāru Kalalu* (Golden Dreams), *Kīrti Kirīṭālu* (Crowns of Glory) and *Abhiśāpam* (The Curse) are sentimental stories set in a sham aristocratic-cum-middle-class setting. *Kīrti Kirīṭālu* received the Andhra Pradesh Sahitya Akademi Award in 1979.

Pilaka Ganapathy Sastry (Pilakā Gaṇapathy Śāstry, b. 1911) tried to grapple with the metaphysical turns of the human situation. In *Kāśmīra Paṭṭa Mahiṣi* (The Royal Queen of Kashmir, 1969) and other novels he uses age-old backgrounds to describe the perversity of rulers and the angularities of human nature. Adi Vishnu (Ādi Viṣṇu, b. 1936) uses a dramatic approach. He is a mature writer of rare depth. He writes incisively, yet provides easy reading. His novel *Rākṣasi Nī Peru Rājakīyamā* (Oh! My Devil, Is Thy Name Politics?) is a telling satire on local politics. Ravūri Bharadvāja has learnt from the School of Life. *Pākuḍu Rāḷḷu* (Slipping Stones,) his voluminous novel, is based on the film world. Bīnā Dēvi's novels have an air of freshness about them. She has been influenced by the techniques of Viswanatha Sastry. Her masterpiece is *Hang Me Quick*. There is great emphasis on the significance of sex in the works of Śīlā Vīrrāju. His *Maina* portrays the struggle for existence of a police constable who has passed through different vicissitudes in his life, from infancy to middle age. Mālathi Chandūr is a household name. Her many novels are touching depictions of the hapless woman. Balivāḍa Kāntā Rāo has been called a pessimist, a determinist and, like Hardy, an evolutionary meliorist. His output has been prodigious. His *Gōḍamida Bomma* (Figure on the Wall) has a domestic setting and is a model on simplicity. Pālagummi Padamarāju, Kommūri Vēṇugōpāla Rāo, Purāṇam Subrahmanya Śarma, Dhanikoṇḍa Hanumantha Rāo, Tāḷḷūri Nāgēswara Rāo, Gollapūḍi Māruthī Rāo, Randhi Sōmarāju and R. S. Sudarśanam are others who have written significant novels.

Foreign Influences. Western novels, through the medium of English translations, have influenced the Telugu novel in form, structure, ideas and characterization. Pioneers like Kandukuri and Chilakamarthi adapted the form and structure of the English novel; Unnava Lakshminarayana, Chalam and others adapted the western approach and ideas; and Buchi Babu and his followers came under the English influence in the matter of idiom, usage and other allied aspects.

As already mentioned, Viresalingam's *Rājaśēkhara Caritra* was inspired by Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*. Chilakamarthi's novels follow the pattern of Dickens' novels. Between his orphan heroes and David Copperfield, Oliver Twist and Nicholas Nickleby, there is much in common. His historical romances are, in general, based on the novels of Taylor and Todd. He has been hailed as the 'Andhra Scott'. The influence of Scott and Shakespeare may be found in Karpoora Manjari's work. Parts of Unnava Lakshminarayana's *Mālapalli* are adapted from Mrs Henry Wood's *Eastlynn*. Two or three characters in one particular chapter owe their existence to the orginal English novel. The realism of *Mālapalli* is undoubtedly due to the author's reading of George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

Chalam's realism is Lawrencian. He must also have been profoundly influenced by Guy de Maupassant. His Telugu sentences are interspersed with English expressions. 'Like Lawrence he makes visual images prick like needles.... Chalam's uncompromising individualism in the tireless

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quest for liberty has a family likeness to the social philosophy of the English anarchists' (D. Anjaneyulu, 'English Literature on Telugu Fiction', *Triveni*, vol. XIV, no. 4, p. 54). Most of the modern writers have been subject to western and world influences. Kutumba Rao and Rachakonda Viswanadha Sastry have been influenced by Marxism and are progressive and materialistic in outlook. Gōpīchand was a radical humanist who drank deep at the fountain of western philosophy. His novels reflect the narrative techniques of H. E. Bates. Pālagummi Padmarāju experimented with Wodehouseian humour in his novel *Bratikina Kālēji* (The Zoo).

Bucchi Babu's (Bucci Bābu; pseud. of Śivarāju Vēṅkaṭasubbarāvu, 1916–67) novels offer psychological studies. His novel *Civaraku Migilēdi* (What Remains in the End) has objectivity and presentation of a Somerset Maugham novel. Begun in 1943, this novel, which the author calls 'the life-sketch of a few young men and women in between the two World Wars', was completed only in 1952. Dayānidhi, the hero, faces several problems in life, yet he is sustained by the belief that his mother is a goddess, a flawless woman. But when he learns that she is really a strumpet, his faith crumbles and an Oedipus complex begins to haunt him. Because of this he becomes unable to enjoy the company of the four women characters in the book—Kōmali, Amṛtam, Suśīla and Indira—who symbolize physical charm, mercy, sympathy and delicacy. The novel opens with the death of Dayanidhi's mother and ends by showing him as a mature man who has risen above all sexual urges. According to Buchi Babu, Man does not need religion, God or politics—he only craves for mercy, in however slight a measure.

Rachakonda Viswanadha Sastry and Naveen adopt the stream-of-consciousness technique perfected by James Joyce and Virginia Woolf and the Existentialist philosophy of Jean Paul Sartre in their novels *Alpa Jīvi* and *Ampasayya* (Bed of Arrows) respectively. Latha successfully adapted *Yama, the Pit*, by Alexander Ivanovitch Kuprin, in her maiden novel *Gāli Paḍagalu—Nīti Buḍagalu* (Kite and Bubbles). G. V. Krishna Rao himself acknowledged that his novel *Kilu Bommalu* was based on *The Power of a Lady*. Gopichand's *Asamardhuni Jīvayātra* (1945) had its origins in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* and Gorky's *The Man Who Was Afraid*. This is his second novel and it narrates the story of the life of a helpless man, Sītārāma Rao, who represents the average Indian in thought and behaviour. Though the six chapters in the novel are individually titled and indicate aspects of the life and relationships of 'the incompetent man', the recurring theme in all of them is the unending conflict between the protagonist and his relatives. The different facets of life teach him different philosophies. Ramayya, the grand old man, acts as his conscience keeper. Sitarama Rao's is a tragedy born of his essential goodness. He strives to maintain his family's name as requested by his dying father. In the process he becomes a pauper and finally, dies.

The contemporary literary scene superficially 'imports characters from the latest English, American and Continental novels. They talk in Telugu, but they talk a language which cannot be understood by the Telugu reader unfamiliar with the latest in English fiction.' Except for a genius here and a thinker there, Telugu writing through the fifties and the sixties appears to have declined. Young writers of promise, such as Sri Subha, Unnava Vijayalakshmi and Y. Veerendranath, have still a long way to go in spite of achieving the quality of readability.

Detective Novels

The detective novel in Telugu (*Aparādha Pariśōdhaka Navala*) is essentially a novel of crime detection. The suspense inherent in most of these novels and their final resolution give great joy to the reader. It is no exaggeration to say that the output of these novels during the period 1965–80 easily outnumbered the total output of all other novels in Telugu. In the beginning, the novels were mainly translations from Bengali, Kannada and English. The translators used to change the locales and the names of the characters to suit the tastes of the regional readers.

The heroes of these novels were like James Bond. They would fall into the hands of their foes, but ultimate victory was theirs. Dilapidated houses, haunted bungalows, underground cells, walls that give way at the push of a button were some of the features of these novels. To this genre belong such novels as *Māyāvi*, *Māyāvini* and *Manōrama* by Venkata Parvateeswara Kavulu and *Vaḍē Vīḍu, Nēnē* by Devaraja Venkata Krishna Rao. *Citra Rēkhalu* by Chintā Dīkṣitulu and *Vakra Rēkhalu* by Munimanikyam were originally novels of this genre that were produced during the period.

Before 1935, Sherlock Holmes was popular in Andhra. But during the Second World War and immediately thereafter there was a lull in the production of detective novels as both authors and readers became more preoccupied with their immediate political and economic problems. However, after 1950, interest in detective stories revived. The English reading public became enamoured of Perry Mason and this led to a creative explosion that produced inexpensive mystery novels in Telugu. Unfortunately most of the stories were not original and many authors did not have the honesty to acknowledge their sources.

In spite of this imitative trend, however, writers like Tempō Rāo, Ārudrā, Śārada, Kommuri Sāmbaśiva Rāo, G. V. G. Krishna and Viswaprasād wrote several original and significant detective novels.

New Trends

Stream-of-consciousness novels came in to prominence

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with Proust's masterpiece, *Remembrance of Things Past*. Telugu novelists followed the western trend and the stream-of-consciousness technique as well as psychoanalysis were employed simultaneously by Bucchi Babu in his novel *Civaraku Migilēdi*. This novel projects a spiritual urge, the hero's personal quest merges with the universal quest. Rachakonda Viswanatha Sastry's *Alpa Jīvi*, Vinukonda Nagaraju's *Tāgubōthu* (Drunkard) and R. S. Sudarsanam's *Maḷḷī Vasantam* were written making use of Jung's theories. Their stories featured characters suffering from inferiority complexes. In Chalam's writings are found the technique of free association and a conscious expression of the influence of the libido. Viswanatha Satyanarayana exploits Freud and delves into the mysteries of the inner selves of his characters. Through symbolic images he describes the conflict between thought and behaviour. *Ēkavīra* (Sole Hero) and *Mā Bābu* (My Darling Son, 1946) by Viswanatha are examples of this kind of writing. *Ēkavīra* is the story of four people: Ēkavīra, Mīnākṣi, Kuṭṭan and Vīra Bhupathi. The story progresses through dialogue and soliloquy. *Mā Bābu* reads like a long monologue. In it the hero not only analyzes his inner consciousness, but also examines in the same way those who come into contact with him. Other writers who were Freudian in thought and Joycean in technique were Gopichand, G. V. Krishna Rao and Naveen.

Bhaskarabhatla Krishna Rao's *Velluvalō Pūcika Pullalu* (Straws in a Flood), Sridevi's *Kālatīta Vyaktulu* and Vaḍdera Chanḍīdāsu's *Hima Jvāla* have given a new dimension to the stream-of-consciousness technique. The unnaturalism in Telugu writing that has come down to the present day through tradition has been done away with in them and has been replaced by an expanded art form which is at once close to life, yet is circuitous. Naveen's *Ampaśayya* is in the manner of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. The happenings of a day in the life of a man are catalogued in the Joycean style. This book has been greeted as a successful experiment. The new experiments have given a fresh look to Telugu writing and have created an anti-hero, setting aside the forces of romanticism. Casual relationships, however, remain unchangeable.

Conclusion

The Telugu novel, which started as an instrument of reformistic zeal and became an avenue of escape into dreamland, has now emerged as a potent literary form with immense appeal. It takes in its stride all the baffling issues of life confronting the individual as well as the society around him, offering insights into the darkest recesses of the mind and opening new vistas of a fuller and greater literary form in Telugu because of its sweep, amplitude and profound penetration.

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Urdu

QAMAR RAIS

It was in the second half of the 19th century, that the form of the novel proper was introduced to Urdu literature, under the influence of western literature. Some of the novels written during the period are considered masterpieces even now. The reason why such outstanding novels were written within a short span was that the foundations of fiction-writing in Urdu had already been laid about a hundred years ago. Some of the famous Persian and Sanskrit romances had been translated into Urdu. Around 1775 an important romance entitled *Nav Tarz-i-Murassa* had been written in Urdu. A little later *Tota Kahāni* (Story of a Parrot), *Arais-i-Mahfil* and *Bāgh-o-Bahār* (The Garden and the Spring) were written by writers associated with the Fort William College of Calcutta. These romances at once became very popular. Some other important Urdu romances such as *Rāṇi Ketkī Ki Kahāni* (The Story of Rani Ketki) and *Fasāna-i-Ajāib* had also been written before 1824. Besides, *Dāstān-i-Amir Hamza* a very lengthy romance had also been penned. Though these romances deal with human beings, the narrative is set in an imaginary world of magic and romance.

After 1857, when educated young people became acquainted with the realistic and didactic novels of English, a new vista opened up before their eyes. They realized that fiction which had been a medium of simple pleasure in the past, could be utilized effectively for presenting social problems and also for popularizing new ideas of reform and enlightenment.

The novel, by and large, is the product of the industrial society. In Europe, realistic fiction came into being after the industrial revolution. In India, there was no trace of industrial development in the 19th century. But the new social and economic, judicial and educational set-up which was replacing the old system certainly had in it certain democratic values of the West. It also reflected the industrial and scientific temperament which had developed in the western world. Equally important were the movements of social reform which were gaining momentum throughout the country at that time. As a result of this state of affairs, the novel became a popular literary form in Urdu.

Nazir Ahmad. Nazir Ahmad (1836–1912) wrote the first novel in Urdu, *Miratul Urūs* (The Mirror of the Bride, 1869). The heroine Asghari is an ideal middle-class girl who by her intelligence, devotion, dedication and ability, makes her husband's home a veritable paradise on earth. This novel is based on one of the novels of a lesser known English novelist, Thomas Day. The plot of Nazir Ahmad's another novel *Taubatun Nuṣūh* has been derived from one of Defoe's novels. Sadiq points out in his *History of Urdu Literature* (p. 323):

> The first English story which had definite influence on him was the history of *Sandford and Merton* by Thomas Day and his *Bināt un Nāṣ* (2nd part of *Miratul Urūs*) is modelled on it.... The plot of *Taubatun Nuṣūh* is taken from Defoe's *Family Instructor* Part I.

In the two novels mentioned above, and in some other novels, Nazir Ahmad has laid emphasis on the education and reform of the middle class which was coming up as a result of the new colonial set-up. In this connection we must take note of the fact that he was not in favour of putting girls into newly set-up schools. He considered western civilization to be a negation of Muslim faith and Indian culture. His two important novels, *Fasanā-i-Mubtala* (Story of Mubtala) and *Ibnul Waqt* (Time Server) were published in 1885 and 1888 respectively. Despite being didactic in character, these novels are indicative of their author's artistic maturity. The novels reflect the conflict of the old and the new values which were coming into being under the influence of western education and culture. In *Fasanā-i-Mubtala*, Nazir Ahmad has shown the evils of polygamy among Muslims. Its hero Mubtala is a Muslim youth. He is not satisfied with his wife Ghairat Begum because she fails to measure up to his ideal of feminine beauty and grace. So he befriends and later marries a prostitute Hariyali. But by marrying a second wife he not only suffers from mental worries, but is also pestered by penury and bankruptcy. In this novel Nazir Ahmad has shown great psychological acumen in his comparison of the homely wife and the prostitute. His *Ibnul Waqt* is a more significant work. This novel is an authentic depiction of the unsuccessful revolt of 1857 and its repercussions. The author had seen the happenings with his own eyes. The hero of the novel, Ibnul Waqt, saves the life of an English officer Mr Noble during the mutiny. As a reward, he is made a Deputy Collector. Nazir Ahmad tolerates this much. But when, under the influence of Mr Noble, Ibnul Waqt models his life on western pattern and wishes to 'reform' the Indians on the same lines, Nazir Ahmad has no patience with him and ridicules him for adopting the western way of life thus alienating himself not only from his own kith and kin but also from the whole society. Ibnul Waqt finds it impos-

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sible to maintain his new life pattern within his limited means and has to borrow money to keep up appearances. After Mr Nobel's departure to England, other English officers do not treat him (Ibnul Waqt) with respect. Ibnul Waqt is gradually weaned away from his community and religion. In this way Nazir Ahmad has condemned the trend of adopting western life and culture.

While commenting on this novel, Ashfaq Ahmad has rightly said that Nazir Ahmad has here brought the extremist aspects of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's reformist movement under fire.

Nazir Ahmad had a mastery over language. He had studied the life of his age in depth. He was equally adept at characterization. But his preoccupation with religious and moral issues and his dogmatism have marred his novels. Despite this, his works are authentic portrayals of the changing life of the Muslim society in northern India. He has enriched Urdu literature with such immortal characters as Ibnul Waqt and Zahirdar Beg. His novels played a significant role in the education and training of thousands of middle-class Muslim girls of many generations in the pre-Independence era.

Pandit Rattan Nath Sarshar. Pandit Rattan Nath Sarshar (1845–1902), a Kashmiri Brahmin, whose forefathers had settled down at Lucknow, was a contemporary of Nazir Ahmad. His very first Urdu novel, *Fasāna-i-Āzād* (The Story of Azad, 1880) is very lengthy and popular. This novel was serialized between 1878 and 1879, in a popular weekly *Avadh Akhbar* and published in four volumes in 1880. The subject of the novel is the decadent culture of Lucknow during the 'Nawabi era'. This novel has no plot. Its hero is a talented, witty and adventurous young man with chivalrous qualities. The author has, in this novel, threaded together the adventures of his hero, Azad. He comes to Lucknow some time in the middle of the 19th century. He, along with his devoted friend Khoji, enjoys the colourful life of Lucknow freely moving from one place to another. During the period he falls in love with a pretty girl, Husn Ara, who belongs to a noble family. When he seeks her hand she asks him, as a pre-condition of marriage, to go to Turkey and participate in the holy war of Muslims against the Russians. Azad, accordingly, sets out for Turkey. After taking part in the war and achieving many distinctions he returns to Lucknow and gets married to her.

Sarshar was basically a humorist and has, therefore, tried to put together in this novel as many humorous situations as he could. For this purpose he created the character of Khoji who is considered the most humorous character in Urdu literature. He is the symbol of the decadent culture of Lucknow and its exhibitionism. This novel seems to have been inspired by the famous Spanish romance *Don Quixote*. This influence is clearly discernible in Sarshar's novel. A few years later Sarshar translated *Don Quixote* into Urdu under the title *Khudāī Faujdār* (1903). He wrote many other novels such as *Jam-i-Sarṣār* (1887), *Sair-i-Kuhsār* (1890), and *Kāmnī* (1894). The theme of these novels too is the decadent culture of Lucknow. But none of these novels could claim the popularity of *Fasāna-i-Āzād*. This novel is more akin to a picaresque. To understand the true significance of this work we must refer to the history of those times. Towards the end of the 18th century, after the decline and fall of the Mughal empire, Lucknow became the seat of learning and culture. The rulers of Lucknow, known as Nawabs, had made Lucknow a very beautiful city. Their coffers overflowed with wealth. The Nawabs studded the the city with imposing buildings and beautiful gardens. A large number of architects, artisans, musicians and poets and masters of various arts assembled at Lucknow. Thousands of dancing girls took residence in the city. People gave themselves up to cheap enjoyment and debauchery. There was an atmosphere of merry-making and gay abandon all round. Festivals were celebrated with great pomp and gaiety. This easy-going attitude gave rise to an ostentatious civilization which was devoid of depth and sobriety. But the one great virtue of this culture was its secularism. Rattan Nath Sarshar has in his novel portrayed this culture in all its varied aspects and has thus preserved it. There are hundreds of characters in this novel, each symbolizing one of the facets of the many-splendoured Nawabi culture. Khoji is a typical symbol of this culture. He is ugly but considers himself handsome. He is short-statured and weak but has the cheek to challenge the mightiest of wrestlers to a duel. He is illiterate but demands the respect due to a great scholar. He believes that all pretty women are head over heels in love with him. The odd situations in which the author puts him provide great fun and entertainment to readers.

It goes to the credit of Sarshar that he has narrated the story of Lucknow and its culture in the typical idiom of Lucknawi Urdu. There is no doubt that *Fasāna-i-Āzād* ranks high among Urdu fiction. A few other humorous novels were penned around the same time. For instance Sajjad Hussain's (1856–1915) *Haji Baghlol*, which is a copy of Dickens' *Pickwick Abroad*. But these novels are much inferior to Sarshar's masterpiece.

Umrāojān Ada. Towards the end of the 19th century Mirza Mohammed Hadi Ruswa (1858–1931) produced his great masterpiece *Umrāojān Ada* (1899) which has been translated into many languages, including English, Russian and Turkish.

In the preface to another novel of his, Ruswa wrote: 'My novels should be considered the history of my times.' *Umrāojān Ada* is the cultural history of Lucknow during the reign of the Nawabs. It is the first perfect novel in Urdu from all accounts. The novels of Nazir Ahmad and Sarshar appear to have been influenced by old romances and alle-

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gories, as regards their narrative style and technique. The influence of early European novels is also evident in their works. But Ruswa's novel is free from such influences. The plot is original and compact and the author has dexterously and beautifully painted the picture of Lucknow's moribund culture in bold relief. It is a biographical novel in which a cultured danseuse, Umraojan Ada, recounts to the author the events of her life; how she was abducted from her home in Faizabad at the age of nine and was sold to a prostitute who owned a brothel at Lucknow, how she learned music and dance at the brothel, how she passed her girlhood in the company of other dancing girls, how the rich men of Lucknow vied with each other to gain her favours, how she eloped with a brigand in an attempt to get rid of her shameful life and what happened to her during the mutiny of 1857. The novelist's singular achievement lies in the fact that he makes the story of a dancing girl the story of a whole decadent culture. He has developed almost all the characters of the novel with such dexterity that each one of them comes alive. This novel can also be said to be the first psychological novel in Urdu. The author has given us flashes of the psyche of his characters especially those of Umraojan, Hussaini, Khanum, Gauhar Mirza and Nawab Sultan. There is no idealistic character in this novel. The author clearly brings out the weak as well as the strong points of each of his characters. The extraordinary popularity of the novel is not only due to the fact that it is the biography of a whore, but also due to its artistic achievement and vivid portrayal of a dying culture. Its plot is unique, exciting and compact with dramatic elements thrown in between. The events of the novel reach their climax in a natural and convincing manner. The author has not once let religion cast its shadow on the novel, but has portrayed the paradoxes and contradictions of the decaying Oudh culture in a humanistic and secular way. During the following three decades, no Urdu novel could equal *Umrāojān Ada* in novelty of plot or excellence of characterization.

Historical Novels

The spread of modern western education, and the growing activities of Christian missionaries made Indians realize that some of their social and cultural beliefs were outmoded. This realization led to the genesis of a number of reformist and revivalist movements. On the literary front this state of affairs created a climate conducive to the writing of historical novels. As in other Indian languages, historical novels began to be written in Urdu too towards the end of the 19th century. These novels gave a glorified account of the achievements of the Muslim heroes of yore. Pictures of the glorious past of the Muslims were depicted in lurid colours. This was done to boost the sagging morale of the community which was in utter disarray after having been divested of power and material resources after 1857. Abdul Hālīm 'Sharar' (1860–1926) and his contemporary Muhammed Ali Tabib (1860–1921) began writing historical novels around 1885. Prior to their publication, these novels were serialized in the respective journals *Dilgudaz* of Lucknow and *Muraqqai Ālam* of Hardoi, U. P., edited and published by the two above named authors.

Sharar took to writing historical novels after reading Walter Scott's novels about the crusades wherein Scott had not only given a biased account of the historical events but had also presented a distorted image of Muslim heroes. Sharar has presented the heroic deeds of the Muslim heroes of the past in his novels *Florā Florendā* (last decade of 19th century), *Malikul Azīz Vārjina* and *Fateh Maftūh* (1916). While comparing Muslims and Christians, Sharar always seems to side with his co-religionists. These novels are weak both from the point of view of art as well as historical veracity. But his *Firdous-i-Barin* (Paradise, 1899) is considered a masterpiece among the historical novels written in Urdu. In the 9th century a number of dissident groups had emerged amongst the Muslims. One of these groups was called 'Firqai Batniya'. This group had its stronghold in far-away mountains where they had built a 'paradise' in consonance with the concept prevalent among the Muslims. Their modus operandi was to capture adolescent Muslim boys and take them to this 'paradise' in a state of unconsciousness induced by drugging. These young boys were kept in the paradise to get addicted to the pleasures of wine and women in beautifully laid-out gardens. When fully 'trained' and 'indoctrinated' they were turned out of the paradise, which they could regain only after they had successfully carried out the job of assassinating some great Muslim scholar or leader. This novel is centred round the 'satanic' deeds of this group. The character of the group's leader, Sheikh Ali Wajoodi, has been delineated in a very convincing and lifelike manner. The plot is well-knit. In this novel Sharar has been singularly successful in recapturing a true glimpse of the age.

Most of Mohammed Ali Tabeeb's novels are weak and fail to recapture the true spirit of the age which they attempt to depict. His novel *Ibrat* (The Lesson), however, is an exception. It is not only the best work of its author but ranks high among Urdu historical fiction. The plot of the novel revolves round the love of Honoria, daughter of Queen Placidia of Italy, and John, son of Maximus, governor of an African colony ruled by Queen Placidia. The novel successfully portrays the important personalities of 5th-century Europe as also the momentous events that shook the whole of Europe during the same period. In this novel Tabeeb shows great mastery over plot and succeeds in depicting some lovable characters.

Premchand's Tradition

With the beginning of the 20th century the impact of the

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new colonial system was visible in every sphere of Indian life. The peasants were the most exploited class under this system of alien rulers. The main cause of the miseries of the village community was the new system of 'Zamindari' (landlordism) which served the interests of the colonial rulers and their henchmen. The National Independence movement which, under the leadership of Tilak and Gokhale, brought about an awakening among the people living in cities and towns, spread to the villages with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi. The whole country reverberated with slogans of 'swaraj' and 'satyagrah'. The Great October Revolution of 1917 in Russia gave a new direction to the freedom struggle of India. Premchand was the first Urdu novelist to depict with a vision the true pictures of this mass awakening. His novels *Gauṣa-i-Ā fiat* (1919), *Chaugān-i-Hastī* (Playground of Life, 1924), *Maidān-i-Amal* (1934) and *Godān* (1936) present the life in Indian villages and its problems against the backdrop of the colonial system. P. C. Joshi has written in one of his recent articles:

> The tragedy of the Indian peasant uprooted from the age-old village system is captured by Premchand with poignancy, depth and intensity of feeling unequalled by any historical writing. The colonial peasant emerges as the 'dramatic personae' in Premchand's writings on account of his deep historical insight into the circumstances of the colonial India on the one hand and his exceptional gifts of literary imagination on the other... the quality of his perception of social reality depended on his direct touch and his spiritual indentification with the colonial peasant who was the object of his writing.
> (*Premchand—A Tribute*, ed. B. Sahny, pp. 28–29)

There is no doubt that the realism in Premchand's earlier novels was tinged with a passion for reform and a respect for moral values. He was also influenced in the twenties by Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence and satyagraha. He emphasizes, in many works of this period, the use of noble means for achieving noble ends. Many of his characters, such as Soordas and Chakradhar, symbolize Gandhian ideals. However, by the time he started writing *Godān*, he had shaken himself free of his idealism. He came to believe that the class conflict and the evils and injustices it caused was the fundamental reality of society and that it was the duty of writers and intellectuals to come forward and arouse the people to act and struggle for creating a just and humane society. As one of Premchand's biographers, Madan Gopal, points out:

> He now wanted injustice to be fought and put an end to. The Gandhi in him had either gone to sleep or the image of the Mahatma had been dislodged from the inner temple of his heart. (*Munshi Premchand*, p. 452)

Premchand's best-known work and his last novel is *Godān*. It is the story of a poor peasant Hori who fights throughout his life to save three *bighas* of his ancestral land. He is exploited and persecuted by the Zamindar, Mahajans, Brahmins and the police. Ultimately he even agrees to marry his young daughter Roopa to an elderly man in lieu of Rs 200 just to save his land. Only death relieves him of his torment and humiliations. While Hori is portrayed as a passive sufferer of the repressive colonial and Zamindari system, his wife Dhania and son Gobar are rebellious. They protest against all kinds of intrigues to exploit the poor peasants. Referring to Premchand's artistic achievement in this novel Mulk Raj Anand observes:

> Premchand achieves patterns in this novel as against the old plots. The episodes are so woven in the fabric that the interior relationship of the various layers of society fuse them into an epic structure, without any violent jolts. (*A Tribute*, p. 17)

The tradition of Premchand's realism made great impact on the writings of many of his contemporaries, such as Lateef-ud-din Ahmed, Ali Abbas Husaini, Upendra Nath Ashk and Suhail Azeemabadi. But the fact is that this tradition flourished better in short stories than in novels. The younger generation of progressive writers also accepted Premchand as their guru and tried to give new dimensions to his concept of realism.

Romantic Interlude

The rise of romanticism in Urdu literature was caused by reaction against the dominance of reformism and didacticism. These romantic tendencies were somewhat different in their temperament from the literature of European romanticism. Sajjad Hyder Yaldram (1880–1943) was the first exponent of this trend. He was influenced by Turkish literature during his visit to Turkey and some Arab countries in the beginning of the 20th century. His novels and short stories pulsate with romantic sensibility. His novels *Salis Bilkhair* and *Zohra* are based on the novels of Turkish writers. The locale and atmosphere of these novels are typically Turkish. The significance of these writings lies in the fact that they helped create a climate in which emphasis was laid more on the aesthetic aspects of literature rather than on purposiveness and didacticism.

Niaz Fatehpuri (1887–1966), Majnoon Gorakhpuri (b. 1904) and Qazi Abdul Ghaffar (1862–1956) also contributed to the development of romantic tendencies. Novels of the above three writers, reflect their attitude of rebellion against the accepted norms of religion and morality. They are devotees of freedom and give great importance to the presence and interplay of feeling and imagination in literature. In this they seem to have been influenced by western writers. Like Keats they adore beauty. They value

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the freedom to love as the greatest of freedoms, although their concept of love is sentimental and transcendental rather than realistic and earthly. Niaz Fatehpuri's *Ek Śair Kā Añjām* (The End of a Poet, 1913) and *Śahab Ki Sarguzaṣṭ* (The Story of Shahab) are in fact long short stories although some critics consider them novelettes. Both of these are love stories but the philosophy of love and the psyche of the characters have been depicted with great insight. Majnoon Gorakhpuri's *Zaidi Ka Haśhr*, *Saidi Zabūn* and *Gardiṣ* are replicas of Thomas Hardy's novels. A deep sense of tragedy runs through all these novels and they end on a tragic note. These novels, do not reveal an awareness of contemporary social problems. The most important among romantic novels is Qazi Abdul Ghaffar's *Laila Ke Khutūt* (Letters of Laila, 1932) in which the writer has presented, in the form of letters, the agony of the inner self of a prostitute. The author has written in the preface:

> This is a small mirror which has been put in front of the so-called reformers and religious leaders so that they can see in it the ugly face of their apathy towards women. This novel is a story of the bloodstained nature of a woman, condemned for ever to lead a life of sin.

Although the plot of the novel is weak, the author has narrated with poignancy and deep insight the degradation and torture to which woman is subjected in a male-dominated society.

Romantic trend in Urdu novel lasted from the beginning of the First World War till about 1940. But it played no significant role in the development of Urdu novel.

Progressive Trend

The emergence of the progressive movement has been the most important literary event of the 20th century. Progressive writers have made significant and rich contributions both in the field of poetry and fiction. They enriched literature with a variety of new ideas and themes. They also carried out experiments in the sphere of technique on the pattern of western literature and thus added new dimensions to Urdu literature.

In the field of fiction, Sajjad Zaheer's (1905–74) novelette *London Ki Ek Rāt* (A Night in London, 1938) deserves special mention. This novelette was perhaps inspired by a story of James Joyce entitled *A Day in Dublin*. In this novel Sajjad Zaheer employed the technique of the stream of consciousness for the first time in the history of Urdu fiction. He has depicted the sad lot of the Indians residing in London, and the mental and emotional agonies they suffer. Naeem, Rao, Hiren, Azam and Ahsan, although engrossed in their own individual problems, were tied together by a common bond with their countrymen, sharing the agony and degradation suffered by them at the hands of the colonial rulers. All the characters of the novelette maintain their individual identity till the end. The author has, by employing the technique of interior monologue, brought out clearly the inner conflict of the characters.

Among the progressive writers who dominated the literary scene prior to Independence and soon thereafter, Krishan Chander (1914–77), Ismat Chughtai (b. 1912) and Aziz Ahmad (b. 1914) deserve special mention. In his novel *Shikast* (The Defeat) Krishan Chander has painted a picture of the poverty and backwardness of the Kashmiri people against the backdrop of the natural beauty of the valley. It is the love story of two pairs of lovers woven into a single plot. On the one hand there is a Rajput, Mohan Singh, who passionately loves Chandra, a Sudra girl; on the other, there is Shayam deeply in love with Vanti. These lovers are the symbols of boundless love, innocence, beauty and freedom. But because of the cruel laws of the Brahminic society defended by the moneyed class, their love is defeated and frustrated. Mohan Singh commits suicide while Chandra goes mad. Vanti also meets the same tragic end.

The novel shows up in bold relief the deprivations and frustrations of the exploited Kashmiri people. Krishan Chander's style is the most impressive aspect of his art. It is beautiful and melodious, like that of poetry. He has also written some formula novels which are not held in esteem. But his satirical fantasies are in very good taste. Among these *Ek Gadhe Ki Sarguzaṣṭ* (The Tale of an Ass) and *Ulta Darakht* may be considered masterpieces. Krishan Chander has, in these works, ridiculed the hollowness of modern democratic institutions like election, the state, justice, law and social relations.

Other important novelists associated with the progressive movement are Ismat Chughtai and Aziz Ahmad. Their realism sometimes borders on naturalism. Both of them rebelled against the feudal values and moribund social taboos of the middle class. Their approach to and delineation of life are rational and progressive. In her novel *Terhi Lakir* (A Curved Line, 1947) Ismat Chughtai presents the story of a middle-class Muslim girl who rebels against social taboos and fights her way to emancipation. She has mercilessly exposed the contradictions and the cruelties of the old social order. She has delineated the character of Shamshad with great psychological insight. In this the author seems to have been influenced by Freud. There is no doubt that Shamshad is one of the most powerful and lifelike characters of Urdu fiction. Aziz Ahmad, too, shows the same understanding of the problems of urban society as Ismat did in her novels. He has written about the feudal and middle class of the erstwhile Hyderabad state. He wrote a number of novels including *Marmar Aur Khūn* (Marble and Blood) and *Āg*, but *Gurez* (Deviation) is his masterpiece. Its hero Naeem is a middle-class youth. But when after his selection to the I.C.S. he goes to Europe

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the lure and lustre of European life corrupt him to the core and he surrenders to a life of debauchery as an escape from the grim realities of life. The author has applied the Freudian technique of psychoanalysis in delineating the character of Naeem. The plot of the novel is well-knit and the technique is fully matched with the subject-matter. The author has also at some places made use of the technique of the stream of consciousness and interior monologue while developing other characters. Some critics have rightly described his characters as being preoccupied with sex.

Saadat Hassan Manto (1912–55), basically a master craftsman of the short story, has also penned a novelette entitled *Baghair Unwan Ke* (Without a Title) which presents the inner tension and turmoil of its hero, Saeed, with poignancy and insight. This novelette also reflects the Freudian concepts. It is the story of a youth who is so timid and introvert that he cannot find the courage to express his love to any girl. He is attracted to many girls, one after the other but his timidity always fails him. He is in love with a maidservant of his house, but his class-consciousness prevents him from making advances towards her. Then he falls in love with a nurse but here also he is inhibited by his meekness. This state of affairs creates in him a sense of utter helplessness and frustration. But ultimately the sexual instinct gets the better of him. Manto's mastery over characterization is evident at every step in this novelette.

The Post-Independence Challenges

In 1947 when the Britishers departed from India, an age-old dream was fulfilled. Apart from the fact that the millions of people were asking themselves whether it was the freedom of their dreams, the dawn of Independence brought unparalleled sufferings for Indian people on both sides of the boundary line. There were communal riots, cold-blooded murders, mass killings, rapes, abductions and also tortures of people migrating from the land of their forefathers. This sorry spectacle of human misery continued till the fifties and brought a wave of despair and disillusionment among the sensitive writers and intellectuals. They were unable to reconcile themselves to the chaotic situation witnessed all around them. It was at this stage, that some of them turned to their inner self. The trend of revealing the inner world was more manifest in poetry and short stories than in novels. But the existentialist ideas of despair, denial and death were getting accepted in this situation, even for the novelists of a new generation. Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar's (b. 1928) novel *Mere Bhi Sanam Khane*, (1948) reflects this trend quite vividly. The theme of this novel is the decline of feudal culture and its values, which has been artistically correlated with the powerful description of the tragedy of human suffering at the time of Partition. In technique and method, this type of novel is a clear departure from the conventional narrative style of Urdu novel. The technique of the stream of consciousness has been used with great dexterity. In this novel, the influence of Virginia Woolf, especially her method of revealing the inner self of her characters, can easily be seen.

Krishan Chander and Ansari. Krishan Chander's *Ghaddar* (Traitor) and Ramanad Sagar's *Aur Insān Mar Gaya* (And the Human Being Died) are two important novels which deal with the horrors of communal riots. In both the novels the authors have tried to awaken sanity and good sense by depicting the blood-curdling events of communal violence. While Sagar's attitude seems to be pessimistic, Krishan Chander does not lose hope and is confident that communal harmony will be restored soon. He tells us that the real sufferers of communal violence are the poor. The end of the novel where a live child is rescued from the heap of corpses by the character Baijnath, is symbolic of the survival of human qualities and the awakening of human conscience.

Perturbed and disillusioned by witnessing the scenes of communal violence and destruction of the composite culture, some of the writers began delving into the past history of the country to see these events in their true historical perspective. The effort led to the genesis of two such novels which may be considered very significant contribution to Urdu fiction. One of these novels is *Lahū Ke Phul* (Flowers of Blood, 1968) by Hayatullah Ansari (b. 1912) and the other is Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar's *Āg Ka Darya* (The Ocean of Fire, 1962). The former is in five volumes and covers the period from 1910 to 1950. The novel revolves around the freedom movement, the participation of the Indian masses in the freedom struggle and the sacrifices made by them for this sacred cause. The description has reached epic dimensions. The vivid portrayal of landless labourers, Harijans, workers and country life in general can be compared with the treatment of such by Premchand.

Ansari, himself a freedom fighter, is a Gandhian. He has therefore, given some prominence to the elucidation of Gandhian thought and its impact on the freedom struggle. He, however, fails to see the significance and the relevance of the contribution made by the patriotic leftist forces emerging in the country. This coloured view ha created an imbalance in the novel. Despite these faults, it may be considered one of the significant novels of Urdu. Mohammed Hasan observes:

> Wherever Ansari has wielded his pen to portray the cultural life in its various manifestations, the novel reaches new heights. He has described with profound humanism the life of princely palaces, the rites and rituals of the feudal Muslim families and the tragedy of nationalist Muslims in the united as well as in the divided India. (*Jadid Urdu Adab*, 1975)

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Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar. This tendency of rediscovering the past and the missing links between the present and the past is also traceable in the works of Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar (b. 1928), Rajinder Singh Bedi (b. 1915) and some other younger writers. Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar whose name has already been mentioned, has produced many significant works during the sixties and seventies. Her contribution to this literary genre, in the post-Independence period is unparalleled. She tried to give it a psycho-philosophical orientation. Her latest novel *Akhir-e-Śhab Ke Hamsafar* (Co-travellers of the Passing Night, 1979) is centred round the underground revolutionary movement of Bengal. One may not share the despair and disillusionment with which she paints the post-Partition events of Bengal, but the fact cannot be denied that her novel is a gallery of beautiful pictures of the political and cultural life of Bengal. The characters of Deepali, Rehan, Uma Rai and Jahan Ara have been beautifully chiselled out.

But Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar's best achievement is her novel *Āg Ka Darya* (The Ocean of Fire, 1962). It is a unique novel in Urdu as regards its technique, subject-matter and treatment. It covers the history of 2500 years of the growth of Indian culture. Its main characters die and are reborn in every stage of the resurgence of Indian culture. Our first encounter with Gaotam Nilamber, Champak and Hari Shanker, the main characters, occurs in the age of Chandra Gupta, when the conflict between Buddhism and Vedic Dharma had reached its climax. These characters are reborn during the reign of the early Muslim Sultans, when as a result of the close contacts and intermingling of Iranians and Central Asian Muslims with Indian people, a new composite culture was taking shape. A third time these characters, along with some others, appear on the scene is at the time of the East India Company's rule, when Indian thought and culture were exposed to western influences. Finally, these characters appear in the novel, little before Independence, when the mirror of the old composite culture was shattered by the partition of the country and the resultant mass exodus. Qurrat-ul-Ain Haidar presents the historical events by employing the technique of the stream of consciousness and the flow of time, with creative artistry.

Other Novelists of the Modern Period

This trend of rediscovering the past is also evident in some other novels of the period. Rajinder Singh Bedi's novelette *Ek Chadar Maili Se* (A Dirty-looking Blanket, 1962) which received the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award, is one of the masterpieces of modern fiction. This novelette depicts the life of a Punjabi village in pre-Independence era. The significance of the novelette lies in its touching and minute description of village life and in its delineation of characters with a rare sense of identity and compassion. Its main character is Rano—the wife of a poor labourer. She is simple, untamed and rough but behind her rough exterior she has a heart brimming with love, sympathy and sacrifice. The story of Rano's endless miseries is the story of the Indian woman's struggle for dignity and identity.

Among the younger writers Qazi Abdus Sattar and Anwar Azeem have recaptured the life of north Indian villages in the pre-Independence era, in their novels *Śhab Gazīda* (Bitten by Night) and *Dhuan Dhuan Savera* (The Smoky Morning). The pitiable condition of the poor peasant under the colonial rule, his exploitation and the lustful lives of the landlords have all been depicted with the help of a few beautifully portrayed characters.

A novel by Jilani Bano, *Aiwani Ghazal* (The Mansion of Ghazal, 1976), deserves special mention. She presents in this novel the reprehensible domestic life of the decadent feudal class in the last days of the Nizam's rule. Most of the female characters of the novel never come out of the palace they live in. Thus the palace becomes the symbol of the crimes of feudal lords. There are some other characters—Hyder Ali, Sanjiva, Qaiser—who form a link between the palace and the Telangana villages, where peasants are in revolt against the prosecution launched by the Deshmukhs and Zamindars. Jilani Bano's skill in characterization outclasses her skill in plot-making. Chand and Ghazal, the two female characters of this novel, will be immortals in Urdu fiction, on account of the depth and vividness with which the author has portrayed them.

There are contemporary writers who have tried to explore the inner complex world of the individual in their novels. But even these writers owe the authenticity of their characterization to a close study of the interaction of society and individuals. For instance, Iqbal Mateen in his acclaimed novelette *Charaghi Tahe Daman* (The Lamp Under the Skirt, 1976) boldly presents a male prostitute, Shanuja, alongwith a female, Kaushallia, who happens to be his mother. In presenting these two distinct characters, the novelist, while describing their inner tensions, anguish and alienation, actually refers to social realities of which they are prisoners.

Joginder Paul is one of the most prolific writers of Urdu. He is a 'modernist realist' in the sense that he is equally concerned with contemporary life, and its artistic presentation. His novelette *Bayanat* (Statements) is the first symbolic novel in Urdu. In it the events are narrated from the viewpoint of three different characters—Daleep, Sahu and Seema. They represent three conflicting forces of modern life; firstly there is immense progress of science and technology which is bringing mankind to the edge of a spiritual desert. Secondly, there are creative forms of art which still represent human emotions and aesthetic sensibilities. Thirdly, there is a mysterious beauty in life and in the universe (i.e. Seema) who appears abandoned on the border line of these two close circles. The symbolic meanings are not revealed openly, rather they emerge effectively with

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suggestive dimensions through the emotional depiction of human situations. Another of his novelettes *Amado Raft* (Arriving and Departing, 1975) deals with the theme of communal riots and reflects his deep sense of human compassion. All the members of Baba Khan's family are killed in a communal riot. He has hallucinations that he too is dead. When he learns that his whole family has been killed, a frenzy of madness grips him. He considers himself the killer and demands death penalty for himself. The following words will amply illustrate the point:

> I am convinced that the man who killed me was none other than myself and that it was the other man who was killed. I am the culprit; whosoever commits murder, the crime will be of the whole human community. I am the killer. Punish me. Hang me. Put me on the gallows until my conscience returns to life. (p. 39)

Hamidi, a young writer from Kashmir, has given us a glimpse of the changing pattern of life and values in the valley of Kashmir, in his novels *Balandiyon Ke Khwab* (Dreams of Heights) and *Ajnabi Rāste* (Strange Paths). The former novel is unique in the sense that it deals in a touching manner with a single episode; a story of quarantined passengers of a bus on its way to Kashmir which is held up by sudden snowfall and landslides. It is a close psychological study of the reactions and responses of various passengers, male and female, belonging to different age groups and classes.

It is not possible to cover all the important novels in this survey. Upendra Nath Ashk, Devendra Satyarthi, Balwant Singh, Akhter Orenvi, Suhail Azimabadi and a few other novelists have also contributed to the development of modern Urdu novel. But most of these writers are the followers of Premchand's tradition. Their works do not represent a new trend in Urdu fiction.

Young writers are taking more and more to writing short stories. The number of Urdu novels has consequently decreased over the years in comparison. The few novels that have seen the light of day are centred around the life in cities and towns and fail to reflect the full panorama of Indian life as Premchand's novels did. However, the novels written during the last one hundred years occupy an enviable place in the history of Urdu literature. They are the pride of Urdu literature and will always occupy a place of honour amongst its various genres.

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